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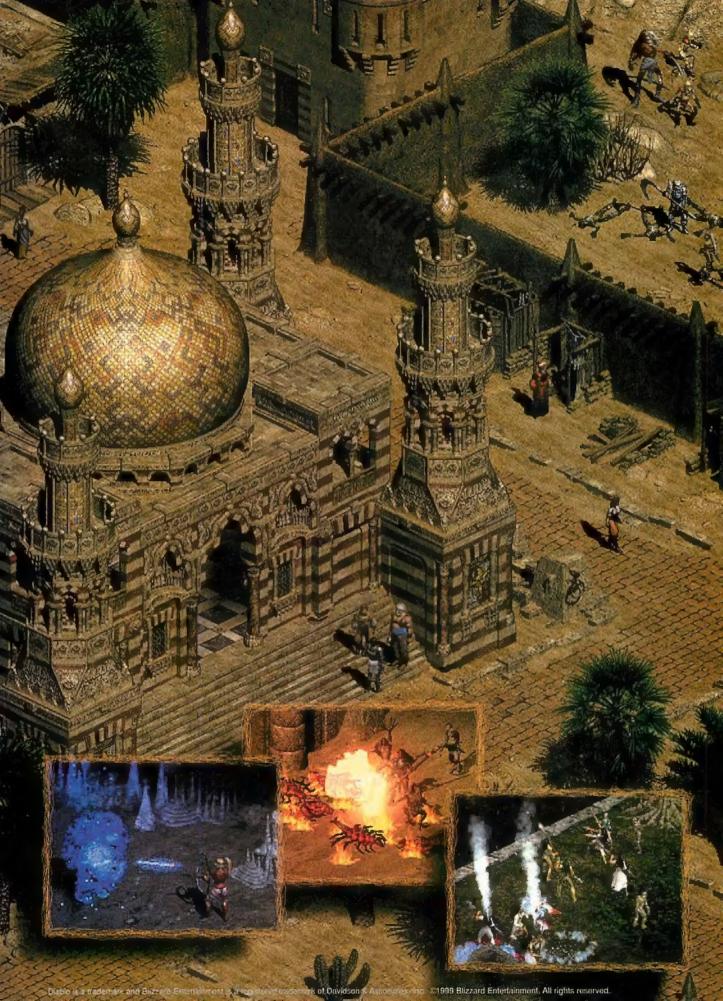


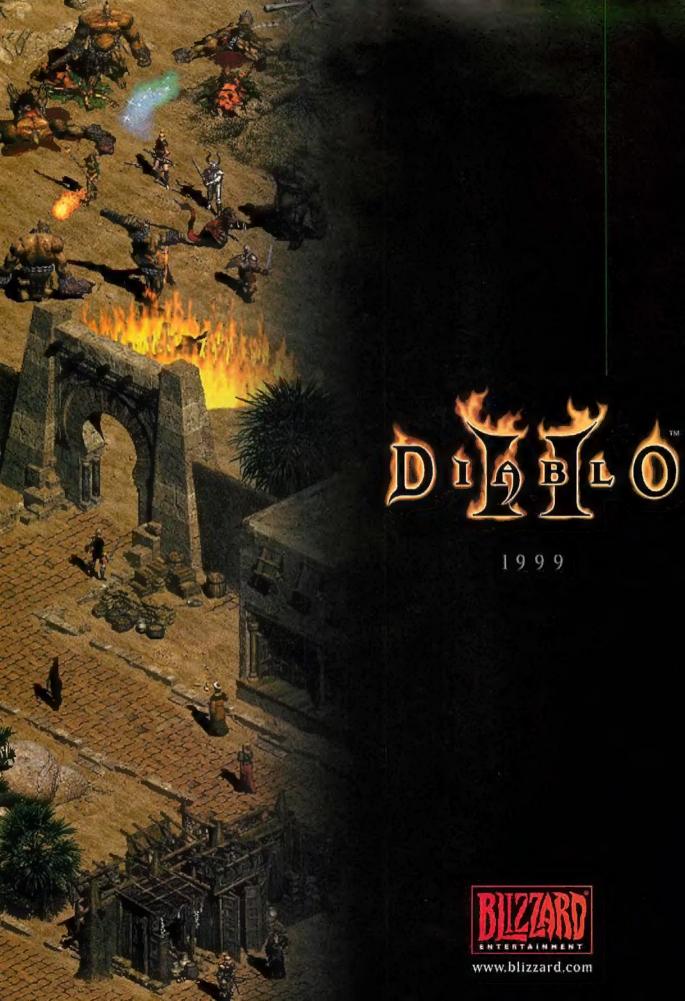


Built with the Bioware Infinity Enginer, the same engine used in Baldur's Gatern

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THE BODIES OF OVER 40
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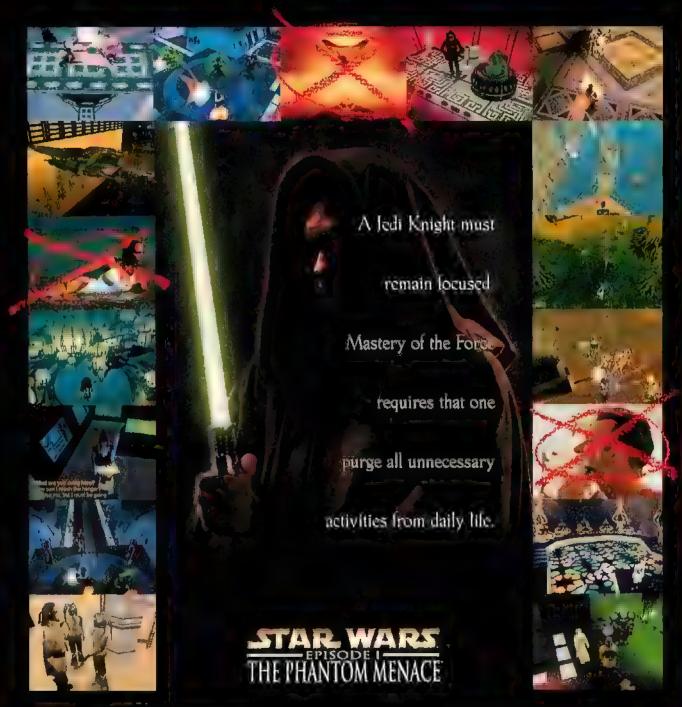
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FOR THE SAKE OF GOOD, VOU GET TO BECOME A DWARF.

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NOVEMBER 1999 • ISSUE 184

COVER STORY

Five Games That Will Change Gaming

We've seen the future of gaming, and it's beyond bright: stunning graphics, incredible storytelling, ambitious online features, and gameplay that will rewrite the book on what games can do. These are the five games every gamer absolutely must know about.

FEATURES

Blasts From the Past

118

Sure, the future of gaming looks great, but we still want to play our old favorites — with 30 cards, better AI, and killer sound. So we compiled this list of 10 classic games that cry out to be remade and the people we think should do the work.











PREVIEWS

Tribes 2

Neverwinter Nights

Final Fantasy VIII

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Sid Meier's Antietam!

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A flight sim your grandmother could love ______78

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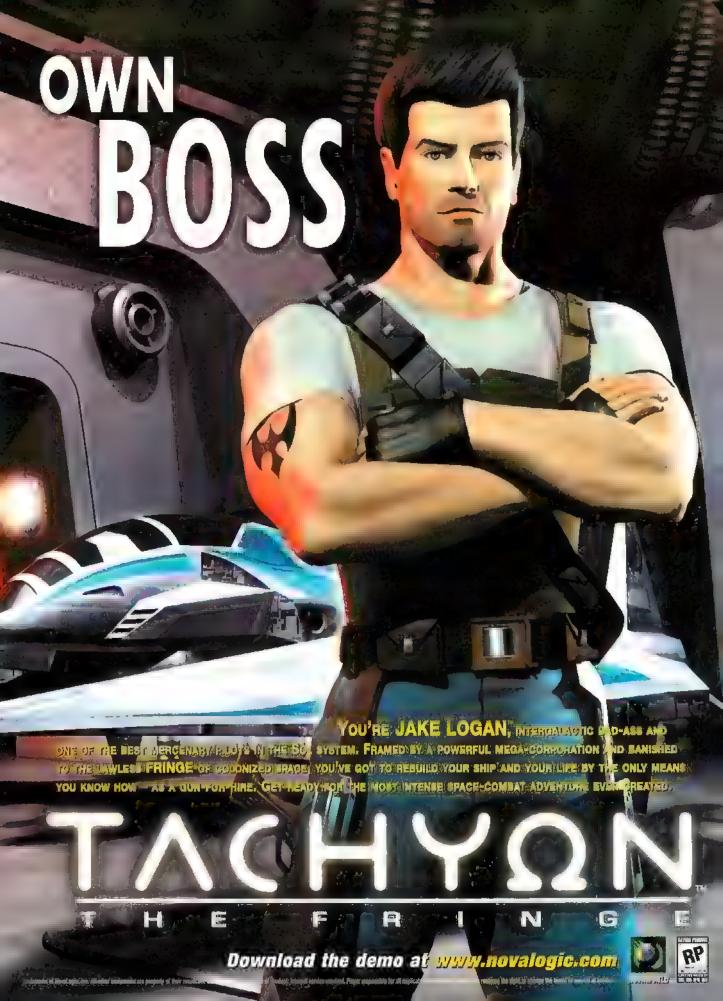
EXPLORE A VAST UNIVERSE COMPOSED OF 7/



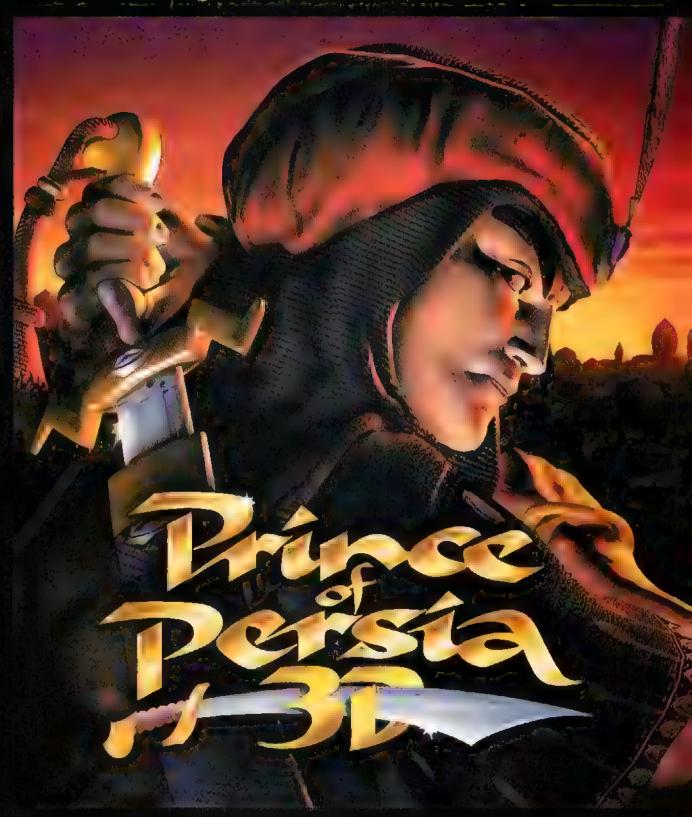
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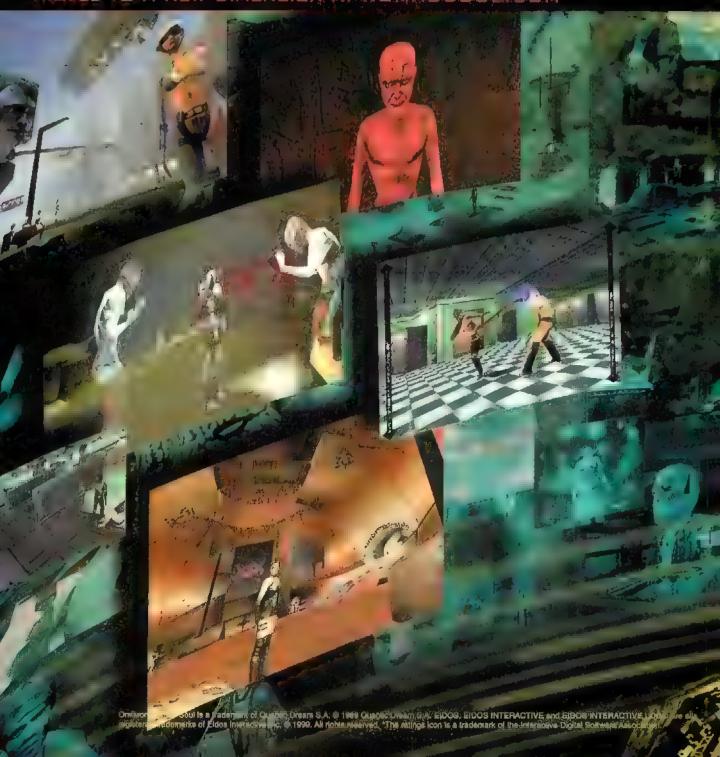
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TALONSOFT

30 UNIT VIEW lets you have a worse-up look at the action

12

O'Clock High



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RUSSELL SIPE

Pretty Fly for a PC Guy

am way too cool for this," I smugly thought to myself as I shuffled into the 1999 Classic Games Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada.

But wait a second, As I sat down and listened to panel after panel of celebrity video game designers talking about their greatest and worst moments, and as I chatted up the attendees at this decidedly non-schmoozy event, I realized the sad truth. In 84 or '89, if you had asked anyone who was into the Atam 2600 and Intellivision what they thought of gamers who played on the Vic-20 or the Commodore 64

> or even the snobbish Apple II, you probably would have heard one word consistently. That word is not "cool"-it's "geek."

Regardless of platform or coolness factor, I was still amongst my kind at the Plaza hotel in downtown Las Vegas, Here, I could talk about that week when I had Tron dreams on a nightly basis to people who understood. And I could also spend some highly pleasurable time with some of the guys-like David Crane and Garry Kitchen-responsible for some of the most innovative game design the industry has ever seen.

In '84 or '89, if you asked anyone who was into the Atari 2600 and Intellivision what they thought of gamers who played on the Vic-20 or the Commodore 64 or even the snobbish Apple II, you probably would have heard one word consistently... qeek.

> Even though the Classic Gaming Expo centered mostly on video game systems and coin-op areade games, it got the CGW editors thinking about the history of our little niche, and the most influential gaming experiences we've had. This month's cover story details five games we think will eventually become significant chapters in this history. And given our misty-eyed nostalgic experience in Las Vegas, we decided to turn one of our favorite lunchtime 'discussions"-what classic computer games we wish someone in the gaming industry would remake-into our second feature story

The end result of all this is a warm fuzzy issue of Computer Gaming World that we're all very proud of Here's hoping you feel the love

Want to wax nostalgic with George? Wax on, at george_jones@zd.com. दिन्य

OMEWOR REAL-TIME STRATEGY



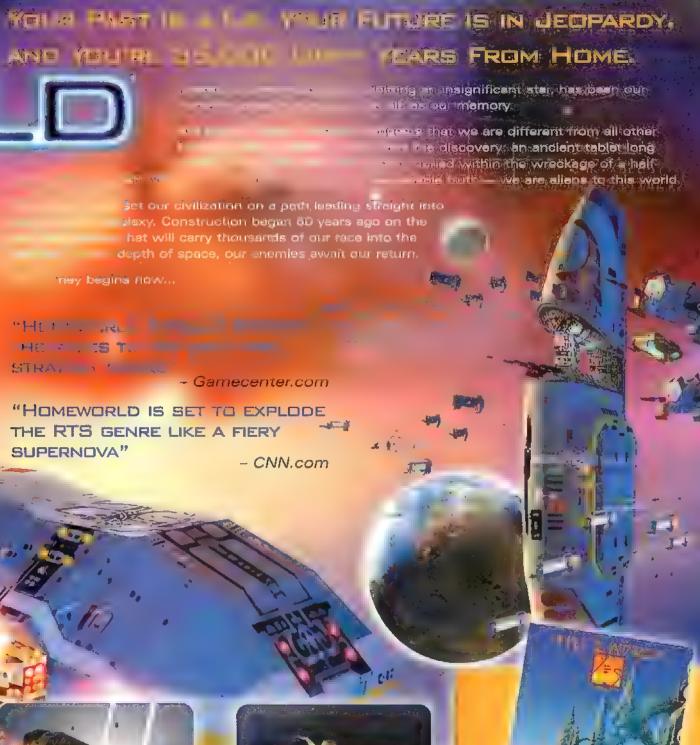


tions and attack tactics as you send your Armada into battle. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses — of each ship class is orthogistic sushing marguders in your path.



MERKE

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seeds to annotation in seeds to you navigate your Armade through on infinite 3D battle-field where the enemy capation from any boint in space



internal artificial intelligence bring each dogfight to life, as turrets track-their targets independently and pilots adjust their flight tectics mid-battle.



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Missing Wrath

DON'T GET SHAFTED! If you want to play the classic Romulan episode "Balance of Terror," you'll have to buy STARFLEET COMMAND from Interplay.

I recently bought a copy of STARFLEET COMMAND, On the way home I glanced through

when their you get a disk with Salance of Terror, the old classic Romular applications the control of the contr

others. Well I called them up ready to pay a few

mokerezare to get that disk but they hald me

that it was unavailable unless purchased directly from them. They also said that they would NEVER release these scenarios for the game on their Web site or even on a future scenario disk. That means, from now until eternity, I shall never be able to play "Balance of Terror" or the "Wrath of Khan" unless I order them from interplay

The worldw a major inconvenience, as I must return the old game to Electronice Boutique order from them, pay more to the game than the mandard market price, and pay shipping as well. For long-time Trekkers like myself, "Wrath of Khan" and "Balance of Terror" are must-haves which you need to alert outtomers to this distributed on the part of Interplay, that they have no choice; they must either purchase direct from interplay of no "Balance of Terror" or "Wrath of Khan" from now until Judgment Day

Dezso Janes Bartha

Kingpinheads

Wy father and I recently went to the computer store to purchase the newly released KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME. He was fine with the Mature rating and knew about the extreme violence that was supposedly in the game. When we got to the store the salespeople who are supposed to be selling us the game acted as though they did not want us to buy it. They told my father that there were incredibly graphic rape scenes that involved 12-year old girls. My father and I were shocked at this fact and stormed out of there. My question is Is what the sales people were telling us all true or were they bending the truth?

Zack Epcar Your salesperson was either moralistic or misinformed. There are no rape scenes amidst the grime and gore, but it's definitely not a game for young players.

Bot Shots

This is directed to game manufacturers' current trend of multiplayer-only games. I do not want to "hone my skills" against bots before I play online. Not all of us play online, and I think some big upcoming games are screwing the single player (you know who you are—id, EA, etc.). I've enjoyed many of your games in the past, you know, when a single-player game was included

I understand online gaming is huge. But I don't think it's fair if you want to play a certain game that you have only one choice I'll also bet there are a lot of people out there that feel the same way. Perhaps the sales of the games will reflect this. At least currently, I'm not limited to "honing my skills against bots."

Tony Pilasiewicz

Querilla Tactics

Liust read Jim Cobb's review of THE OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR II (September, pg. 160) and I had to chuckle. In the review he states, "And how guernilas, no matter how feisty, can hold out against large, well-supported regulars is a mystery to me." Don't feel like you are alone I'm sure Lyndon Johnson, General Westmoreland,

and Robert McNamara felt the same way about the Vietcong.

Jeff Traylor



Target Practice

Since you have been a little hard on yourselves intely about contributing to society, just thought you should know that Computer Gaming World does have some social value. After read the magazine Hat my won have it. He loves looking at it is not we are using it as a potty training and by letting him look at it only when he alts on the potty Ha an avid computer gamer shouldy at four.

Allen Branin Doha, Gatar

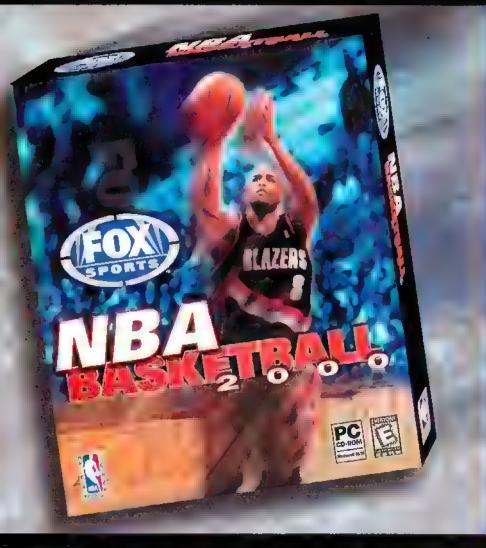
More Answers to Life's Tough Ouestions

Your magazine is always informative and a pleasure to read. It's also heartening to notice that you agree with me on two of the answers to life's tough decisions, namely brunettes and Guinness, which, when paired together, make for an interesting evening. Newcastle Brown Ale will do in a pinch, but brunettes are tough to replace

Here's to continued success and more buxom female vampire covers

Kurt Schulz Benton Harbor, Michigan

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Addictive gameplay that's

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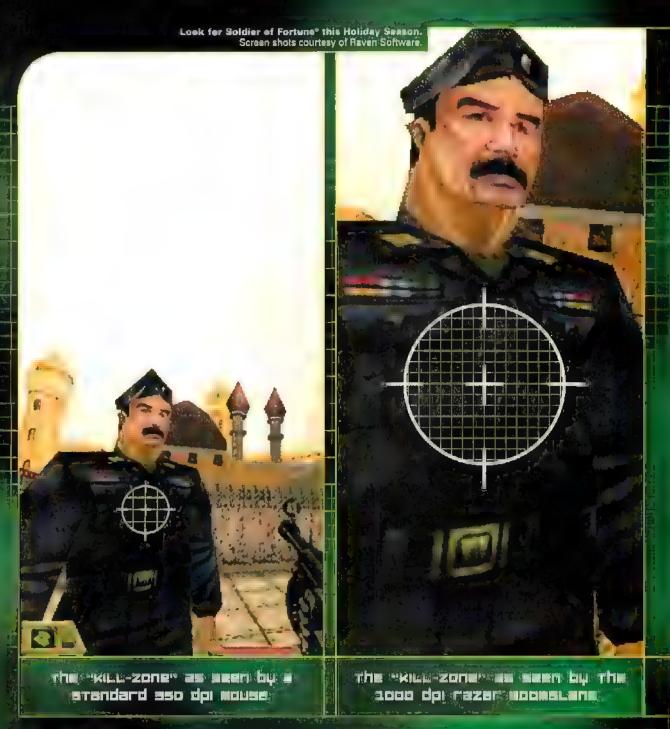


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YELF C.E.E.



[dead player index]

Next-generation shooters like Soldier of Fortune demand next-generation accuracy, introducing the Rezer Boomslang :

- · More Kills Up to five times the accuracy of a normal mouse (1000 dpi and 2000 dpi available)
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The Latest News From Around the Gaming World • Edited by jeff_green@zd.com

Interplay Unveils Next **Fantasy** RPG

ROWNED DALE A DUNGCON ROWN Using BALDUR'S CATE

Interplay just unveiled its plans for the next RPG set in the AD&D Forgotten Realms universe, and no, it's not BALDUR'S GATE 2 — not this time. You'll probably hear more about that sometime soon, but in the meantime, Interplay hopes to satisfy your AD&D jones with ICEWIND DALE, an action-oriented dungeon romp set in the northernmost tip of the Forgotten Realms.

Due early next year, ICEWIND DALE uses Bloware's BALDUR'S GATE engine, but is going

to go heavier on the action and lighter on the plot, a la DIABLO. "We looked at what it took to make BALDUR'S GATE, and what people liked," said Chris Parker, the game's producer (and in-house producer on both BALDUR'S GATE and the TALES OF THE SWORD COAST expansion). "We thought we could probably do a very fun and exciting, more action-based RPG. Since PLANESCAPE. TORMENT (Interplay's other big AD&D RPG now in development) is a hardcore, quest- and story-based RPG, we thought it would be cool to make a lighter game that was more action-based, and we realized we could do it with the BALDUR'S

The game is going to take place entirely underground in a series of dungeons, with a variety of environments, including snowy

nordic regions, voicanic areas, and steamy jungle. The game's monsters will be up to four times bigger than the biggest creatures (the wyverns) in BALDUR'S GATE According to Parker, ICEWIND DALE will still feature numerous quests and subquests, but the emphasis this time will be much more on combat and character building, rather than storytelling. As such, the current plan is to let characters reach Level 12 or 13 — much higher than in the original BALDUR'S GATE.

"This will be a classic dungeon crawl," said Parker. "In fact, that was the first tentative name for the game. The main

focus will be going after cool items and spells and leveling up."

One cool feature for serious role-players is that the game will be entirely party-based.



you'll be able to generate your whole party of six characters from scratch at the game's beginning. Black Isle is making minor tweaks to the dame engine - such as speed improvements for character movement - but in general is not futzing with it.

"Wa're basically just generating content and building tons of levels," said Parker. "We're not monkeying with Bioware's engine We're taking what we can from their wisdom." The game will incorporate the AD&D 2nd Edition rules, rather than the just-announced 3rd Edition rules. mainly due to timing.

"Rewriting the rules inside the dame emploe would require a gutting of the engine, and we don't want to do that " he said. "The payoff might not be enough at this point."

Finally, gamers should know that there is no overlap with BALDUR'S GATE at all in ICEWIND DALE. You won't be able to import your BG characters, nor will there be any characters from the earlier game appearing in the new dame, It's a brand-new experience

Can ICEWIND DALE compete in the ever-growing action-RPG held - especially with Diable 2 Some some some thought the same time? With the ADAD license and the popular HALDUR'S CATE angins. it has a better chance than recor. We'll bring you more on this game as it gets closer to completion. - Jeff Green



5, 10, 15 Years Ago in CGW

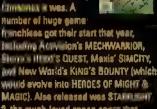
Nev./Bec.1984 It was 15 years ago this month that CGW



reviewed F-15 STRIKE EAGLE, a landmark game for two reasons: First, it was one of the first attempts at a serious flight alm on a personal computer; and sacand, it was the virgin game design veyage of a young guy named Sid Melor. Major would leave flight sims behind for strategy games, but the mark made by F-15 would remain for years to come, So havel was the flight sim concept that our review actually spelled out the fact that you could bank, roll, dive, and even do manauvers like a Split-S, Opeoph. And we raved over the fact that there were him all and ground targets to shoot at, tives though the ground targets were colored triangles on an endiese see of green. We've come a long way, baby.

larriximum, ratrio darty

in 1989, and what a



franchises got their start that year, Inclination Activition's MECHWARRION, Sierra's HERD'S QUEST, Maxis' SIMCITY, New World's KING'S BOUNTY (which Would evolve into HERCES OF MIGHT & MAGIC). Also released was STARRIGHT 2, the much-loved space open that would spewn the STAR CONTROL series;

Check

There are a lot of really great games on this month's list, as avidenced by the high number of aditors' choice awards. Just to balance things out, we included BEATDOWN, Here's our roundup of 10 recent games and their corresponding review scores from the major gaming mags and Web sites. All scores use each pub's own scoring system. • Yellew indicates an aditors' choice same.

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TA: Kingdome	1	82%	4		14	1

Hovember 1984

The first-person ection eraza kicked



into high year in the Fall of '84. We were gags over DOOM li, and aghast at the first wave of BOOM rip-offs that every game company and their cousing ware madly cranking out. Among the first wave of "1100M Toss" your popers of trach life talk OF THE DEAD, OPERATION BODY COUNT, and THE FORTRESS OF DR. RADIAKI. But there were some winners in the lanch, like interplay's DESCENT, LucasArts' DARK FORCES, and our pick for the best DOOM TOO-HERETIC

1999 GenCon Report

Big PC Game Presence at Annual Geekfest



Were you getting jiggy with it August 5th-8th? The gaming geeks — and we include ourselves — sure were.

Over 57 000 attendees, all but three wearing black XXXI. t-shirts, broke records at the four-day GenCon convention in Milwaukee, hosted by Wizards of the Coast. There were quite a few computer game companies showing their wares in addition to all of the pen-and-paper games, collectible card games, board games, and miniatures games that were on display and being played.

The big non-computer game announcement actually ties in to computer gaming. Wizards of the Coast and their subsidiary TSR announced that Dungeons and Dragons 3rd Edition rules were under development, and will be released at next year's GenCon. This led into two big computer game announcements.

First, SSI officially announced POOL OF RADIANCE 2 and showed a brief clip: it will be a single-player, party-based game. In addition, Interplay and Bioware announced and showed off NEVERWINTER NIGHTS, Bloware's next Forgotten Realms game, following their massively successful BALDUR'S GATE. This game looks like it could be huge (see our sneak preview in this issue). Both games are Q4 2000 releases and will use 3rd Edition D&D rules.

Gathering Of Game Companies

Sony and Verant, makers of EVERQUEST, officially debuted SOVEREIGN, a massively multiplayer real-time strategy game. Games can be played with as few as four players and as many as 500. Verant was also showing off the EVERQUEST expansion, the RUINS OF KUNARK.

 Hasbro Interactive and Microprose were showing DIPLOMACY, RISK 2, and MAJESTY We were intrigued with MAJESTY and went back to play it several times. It looks like an RTS fantasy game but plays like a god game

 Activision was running all of their Star Trek games along with VAMPIRE and SOLDIER OF FORTUNE. VAMPIRE continues to look terrific, with more levels and characters since it was last shown at E3.

• Sierra was showing BABYLON 5, HOMEWORLD, PHAROAH, and GABRIEL KNIGHT 3. Jane Jensen, designer of all the GABRIEL KNIGHT games, told me that GK3 may be the last Sierra adventure game for quite some time, if not forever. Jane herself is going to concentrate on writing novels after GK3 is limished.

* Interplay had PLANESCAPE* TORMENT running along with STAR TREK NEW WORLDS. NEW WORLDS is a ground-based RTS game with no infantry—the game is all hovering, armored vehicles in a nice 3D environment, As this story was going to press, though, word started leaking that the game was in trouble, and was being pulled back for serious restructuring of the campaign levels. Don't look for it anytime soon.

 Gathering of Developers had a new build of RUNE using the UNREAL 2 engine, but it's too early to say much about it. They were also showing DARKSTONE and AGE OF WONDERS, which keeps looking better.

Westwood was showing NOX and COMMAND AND CONQUER:

The GOOD...



RE*VOLT One of these amazingly great little games that comes from out of newhere to bleve up away, and cause us to once again miss all of our deadlines. This remais-countrol car racer is fun and

addictive — and it leaks awesems too. One sign it has taken ever: Resident crank Dave Salveter has been screening, oursing, and breaking centraliers in his office all week. Face it, Dave: You suck.

PALM PILOT GAMEBOY

EMULATOR According to the PalminioCenter Web site (www.palminiocenter.com), a developer named Mayon is hard at work on a Gamehoy emulator for the Palm Pilot. This must happen. Someone give this man some mency. We went to play Pokemon on our Palm Pilots. No, really — we de.

the BAD.

TIBERIAN SUN MULTIPLAYER LAMENESS

We're enjoying the game, in general, after a few days of playing the final release, but we've had nothing but trouble stying to play a multi-



player game – it orashes constantly and dreps players and withest warning. This game was years in the making. Bugs are (nexcusable.

MON CHEF CANCELLED Oksy, as it slown't have anything to do with gaming. But this competitive eaching show from Japan was one of the heat things on TV, and its appeal to gamers was widespread. Watching a QUAKE match isn't half as cool as watching two gournet chefs compete, making dishes like tongue ice cream. Bring it back!

and the UGLY.

PIRACY RUNS RAMPANT

Gaming software piracy seems to be getting werse and werse, with cracked games appearing on the internet the day they ship — or before. Pirates are



announcing the availability of cracked games on Usenet, and even offering reviews. Understand this: Pirating games is not fromy, soot or "rabe" sus: ** the companies don't make money, they step making, games, is that what you really want? Cut it out. Try diplomacy first.



You can always invade them later.

AWALON HILLS

Diplomacy

Bring out your inner dictator

May your wit he as sharp as your sword, because Avalon Hill's Diplomacy has captured the true spirit of the legendary board game. You'll start as one of the seven pre-WWI superpowers, England, Prance, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, and Austria-Hungary. These political boundaries will become your prey as you negotiate your way to the top. Beg, threaten, plead and argue your way past nations where friends become pawns and enemies become allies. You'll inve to be canning. Smooth. And deceitful. This is a game that can't be left to chance.





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MECRO PROSE

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TIBERIAN SUN, and that game — now on store shelves — was drawing a huge crowd of onlookers Strategy First had CLANS and DISCIPLES on display. DISCIPLES is a HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC wannabe with deeper RPG elements and some nice spell effects. Cavedog was showing TA: KINGDOMS, and let it slip that they are working on an expansion pack for that game that will add a fifth race. New World Computing was showing the new HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 3 expansion, minus the sci-fi scenario that got them into so much hot water with fans at E3

City on Fire

Gen Con is much more than computer games, of course The convention spilled over into several buildings. It was just flat-out cool to walk around and see everyone passionately gaming their hearts out. There were hundreds of MAGIC: THE GATHERING variants on display at GenCon, including a pro wrestling card game and a beer card game. Pokemon players were in full force, and they're not just kids. Wizards was also showing a beta version of a new Magic encyclopedia CD. This includes all the cards, a deck builder, all the rules from the different editions, and even a way to play over the Internet, You can play with any deck you want to make and you will get to see the card art while you play. The only catch is that the players must enforce the rules — there is no AI.

For four days, gamers held Milwaukee captive. Hotels and restaurants were flooded with folks carrying odd-shaped dice and tackle boxes full of lead inmatures. There were also a lot of women who attended Gen Con, which was a much welcome difference from E3. Us gaming guys are always looking for an excuse to break out our best black t-shirts.—Mark Asher

The Next X-Com Game Is...Email Only!?



ait! Don't delete that email! Instead of a "get rich quick" scheme, it might just be an invitation to piay EMAIL X-COM from Hasbro Interactive. Coming this October, EMAIL X-COM will be priced at \$14,95. Better yet, only one player needs a copy to play email or hotseat games.

Players will be able to download a client that will allow them to join games.

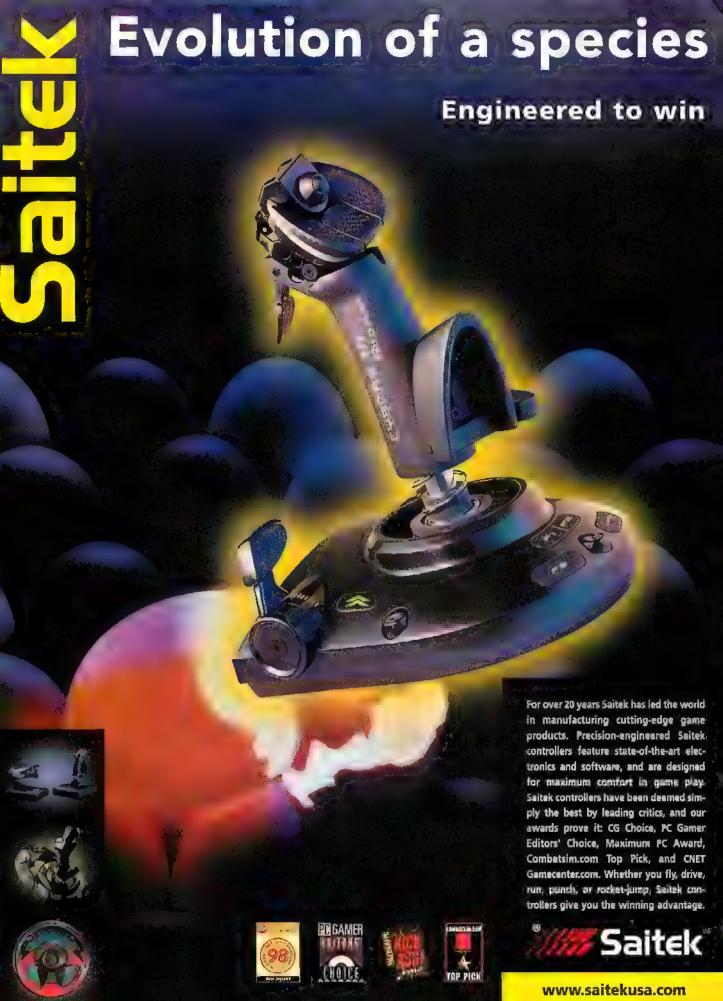
The familiar, turn-based, tactical combat gameplay takes place in 25 pre-generated scenarios, and yes, you can play as the aliens of finally! There are five different settings urban, ice, downed UFOs, X-COM base, and the alien base. The usual suspects are present, including squaddies, mutons, ethereals, chrysalids, snake man, sectopods, and sectoids.

This is a streamined game; the strategic overlay in the original X-COM is gone, letting you get right down to the man-on-alien action. The game's look is different, too, with everything taking place on one screen. The 24-bit color graphics are clean and onep, but won't make you uninetall UNREAL.

I've had a stupid grin plastered on my face while playing EMAIL X-COM There's something cool about getting an X-COM email instead of the usual dreck. Now if only I could sic my mutons on those stinking spammers! —Mark Asher

Send updates to: cgwpipeline@zd.com

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STEALTH

The Latest Dirt From the Gaming Underground

You want the latest? We sure do. And that's why we've contacted Mr. Sneaky again. We don't know who he is, but if you see a black helicopter hovering nearby, that's him. He uses phone taps, bloodhounds, and handwriting analysis to dig up the latest. He steams open letters, hijacks Fed Ex shipments, and fondles a Ouija board to get the scoop. He even used Kato Kaelin, but that didn't help much. The guy's spooky and altogether ooky, but he dishes the real stuff...

Computer game companies are panting over the rights to base a game on the summer's hottest movie, *The Blair Witch Project* (take that Jar Jar!). Electronic Arts, Activision, G.O.D., and others are talking with the filmmakers. There was some initial confusion over who owned the game rights, but apparently Artsan, the film company, didn't bother to secure them when they bought *Blair Witch*. Rumor is that G.O.D may have the inside track.

With JAGGED ALLIANCE 2 in stores and apparently a hit, Sirtech has already started work on JAGGED ALLIANCE 3, another game switching to 3D. Impressions, those Caesar and Pharoah fans, are thinking of doing a game built around vampires.

Rumor is that Microsoft isn't happy with Digital Anvil's CONQUEST, a space strategy game. Seems that the game just isn't fun, so expect this to be pushed further back into 2000 as it's retooled. MS and DA are considering

BY MASSING ARY

some changes, such as allowing players to control ships, a la STAR CONTROL. Microprose is working on X-COM

GENESIS, a return to the turn-based roots of the series...Xatrix, makers of KINGPIN, is rumored to be going belly-up. Interplay is trying to work out an agreement to buy them and keep them going as a studio development team.

With the cancellation of A-10, the entire Janes' Skunkworks team at Origin is no longer "wanted" at Origin and was whacked to a man. Er, I mean they were given the opportunity to "apply" for open jobs around Electronic Arts, but that would mean relocation. Even star producer Andy Hollis is looking at opportunities elsewhere in EA. Speaking of cancellations, word is that Acclaim has cancelled the RPG THRONE OF DARKNESS, and that the developers, Click Entertainment, are now shopping around for a new publisher.

From the file labeled "B" for bizarre, rumor is that Origin is working on ULTIMA ONLINE 2, which will use the ASCENSION engine. Here's the bizarre part: EA has recently increased the parental control of their on-line products, possibly so that UO2 will be able to feature consensual sex. The developers are rumored to be kicking around ideas about how to animate characters making "the boast with two backs." If implemented: Both parties will agree to the act and then go into a private room to exercise their, um, imaginations.

Heard something? Want to drop a dime on somebody? Contact Mr. Sneaky at sneaky@zd.com - conlidentiality guaranteed.

CGW PROFILE

We Talk to G.O.D.'s Boss

Mike Wilson

Are you the Godfather

I actually founded it with Harry Miller and about 10 other partners... so, I'm not sure if I'm the Godfather or Godmother Godfather or Godmother Goder than me and baid, so I think he should be the dad.

2. Whe would be better at QUAKE? Gilligen or the Skipper? Skipper, Looks like he's:

skipper, Looks like ne a spent more time in a that then fillform if you ask me, though, Lovey was the true fragmaster, of that group,

3. is the ultimate game? I rying to land a title empths churts?

Hard to say. The "charte" these days means more and mere "dumbing down." If we can put out one of the very select few games each year that makes the charts because it's a great game, like HALF-LIPE, STARCRAFT, or RAINBOW 6, we're thrilled. We'll never move the volume that Ford does, but that's because we make a Lexus.



Wait and see, pal, welt and see. Third Lew is making a kick ass firstperson shooter based on Todd McFarlane's KISS FSYCHO CIRCUS universe. If it weren't based on PSYCHO CIRCUS, it would still be the same amazing game. Check out she comics if you don't get how this can be cool... then just wait and see the game. Third Lew will show the worldhow to do a licenjacd-property game right. We've seen plenty of exam-

ples of how to do it wrong.

Tchatchke of the Month

Ted Nugent Gonzo Meat Biltong

"OID YOU EAT THE BILTONG?!?"
This was the panicked cry heard
throughout the CGW office on one
recent unforgettable afternoon.

The "biltong" was brought to our office by EA as part of a press demo for TEO NUGENT: WILD HUNTING



ADVENTURE. It looked like beef jerky. It said "original beef" on the package. It said "once you biltong, you'll never jerky again." How could we not eat it?

But then something terrible happened. Ever-curious Copy Editor Holly Fleming decided to look the word "biltong" up in the dictionary. And life hasn't been the same here since.

Those miserable souls who ate the biltong will have to five with this equation for the rest of their sad, termented lives:

Bil + tong = buttocks + tongue.

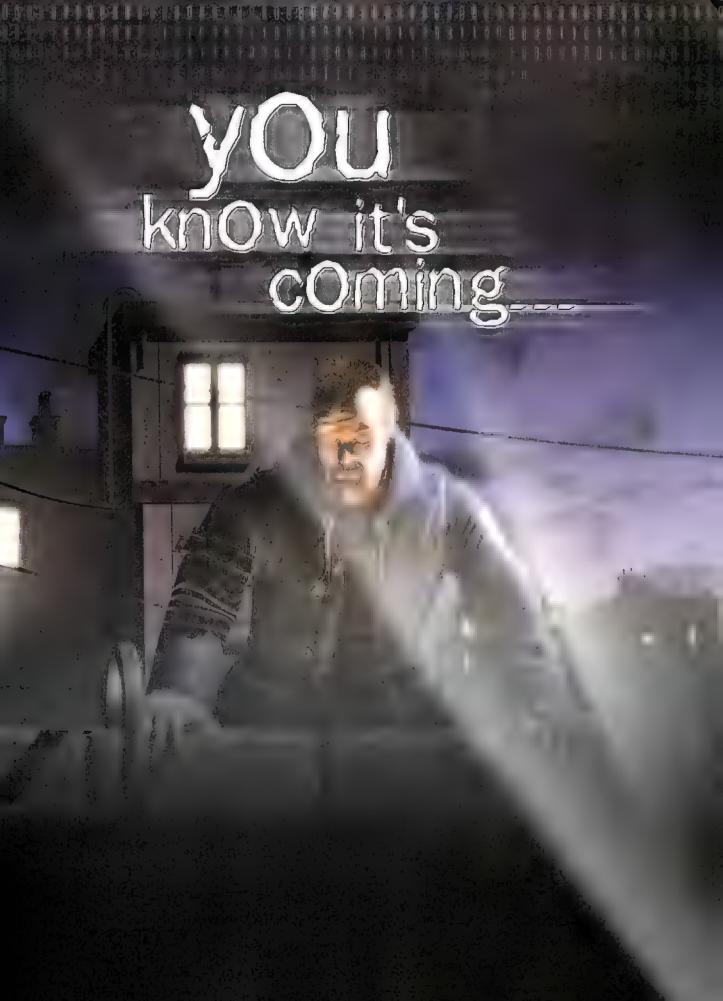
Even worse, the definition also mentions the words penis and testicles. So the best case scenario is that we ate

From "Cat Scratch Fever" over 20 years ago, to this. Ted Nugent is apparently determined to make us miserable for the rest of our lives.



5. Could Max
Payne whip Lara
Croft?
He obviously could,
but that's not really
his style... he likes
'em spunky like

that. She's been a bad, bad, girl and could use a good spankin', though, laterview by



Darkness falls over the city. Not the kind of darkness that comes we the absence of light, but rather the absence of good. And while make prepare to naively celebrate the new millennium, a small mysteric cult, known as The Fallen', prepares to fulfill the dark promise an evil prophecy. Yet, left standing between these Fallen ones is a rookie cop and a disillusioned extension one woman. ...one man. ...one good.



Good cop or ex-cop? The choice is yours as either the youthful, hand-to-hand combat super-sleuth, Officer D'Arci, or disgruntled, street-smart, weapons expert, Roper McIntyre,



Explore and interact with anything and everything, as you carry out your objectives across 27 mission-based levels, within a 200 x 200 block cityscape.







URBAN CHAOS





Part action, part adventure— all potentially lethol, as you platform your way through five distinct sections of the city.



Brutal street fighting awaits on the Union City streets, with intense hand-to-hand martial arts combat, which chases and drive by shootings, and desperate automatic gun shootouts in dark alleys.



For a closer look go to effos com



ou are Locke D'Averam, a once proud warrior-prince executed for falling to perform a ritual sacrifice, to,000 years later, you've been resurrected from the dead by a prominent warlord to rescue his kidnapped daughter.

You are now part of a very special breed of warrior. You are a revenant. In order to regain full strength, you'll need to practice the problem-solving ability necessary to unlock forgotten skills.



And though there may be the whole Island of Ahkuilon to explore, and more than 40 monsters to destroy, there's only one Locke D'Averam. And however you choose to live as Locke, we think you'll agree. Life is better the second time around.

- Immerse yourself in a gripping storyline involving the future of the entire world of Ur
- Enjoy explosive spell casting effects unparalleled in any other CRPG game
- Extensive NPC interaction enables you to discover who you once were
- Multiple modes of combat include stealth, hand-to-hand, bow and weapon:
- Thousands of 3D animations bring the inhabitants of Ahkudon, as well as breathtaking combat moves, to life
- Choose from 4 character classes in multi-play mode





Check out the interactive demo at www.eidos.com

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COMING BACK FROM THE DEAD DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE GETTING BETTER.

includes
all the tools
you need to
make your
own custom
levels

ELENATION ON Libertime Isn't entough





3dfx

EIDOS.



"Soul Reaver is a deep game possessed with a myriad of impressive little touches... 9/10" - Video Games.com

"3D exploration and adventure at its finest... Game of the Month."

Expert Gamer Magazine



"A technical achievement... Soul Reaver delivers an epic piece of vampiric literature... 93%" | IGNPSX.com

"98%" PS Extreme Magazine

"Soul Reaver's environments are jaw dropping." - Gaming-Age.com









TACLED IN THE STREET OF THE FIRST LANG.

Sneak through the darkness Ersilence the enemy









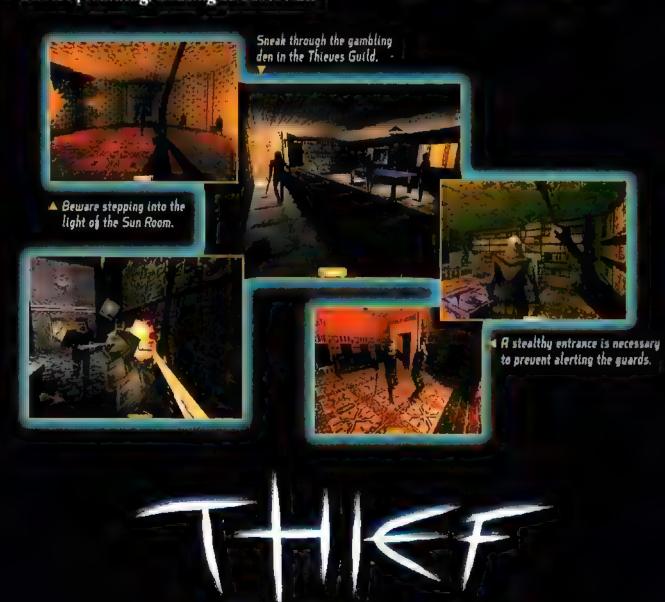






Discover why thousands of gamers worldwide are silently sneaking through the darkness. Journey through night, as Garrett, a master thief, cloaked in the darkness of a sinister medieval realm where shadows are your only ally, trust is not an option, and confrontation can bring very grim results. Thief Gold takes you beyond the smash stealth hit, Thief: The Dark Project. With three treacherous new missions and fine-tuned gameplay, Thief Gold delivers breathtaking new levels of stalking, stealing and survival!

FENTURES FAILERS WE THE





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Will Williams, Dallagers, 1966 Inflations, Strangers Schools, and Allele Strategy are included at the Strangers, L.P. (6) 1807 1808 the Short L.P. (6) 1808 Abstractive of the Antiqueter of the Antiqueter of Strangers and Antiq





Suspect everyone. Trust no one.







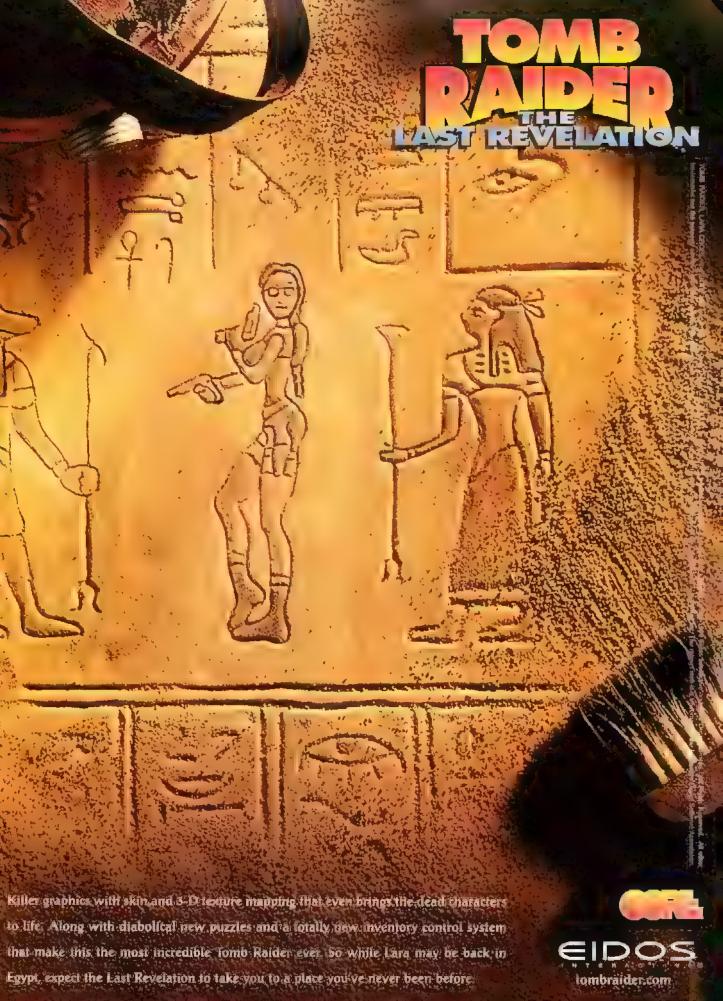


evoke sheer terror among a few ill-fated network friends. Just remember, this is a place stalked not only by creatures but by change, now world filled with horrors even more unimaginable than in the one before. WWW.DAIKATANA.COM

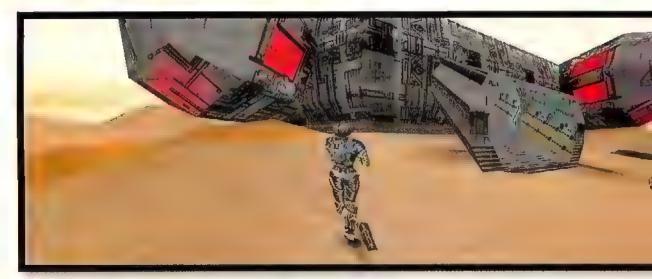
the interestive from one traditional of Saffe bitalands, this, to the LEE and other better decreased. The district state of the section is the section of th







PREVIEW



Tribes 2

"ve heard that you can infer people's tastes from the things they create; if so, I imagine that sometions who worked on TRIBES was a huge fan of Robert Heinlein's Starship Troopers. TRIBES has many of the elements of Starship Troopers that I wanted to play after seeing the film; brutal, fast-paced team action in

	slick powered	
TRIJLES 2	armor; people	
GENRE: Action RELEASE DATE: Q2 '00	with big guns	
PUBLISHER: Sierra/Havas	out in the open	
DEVELOPER: Dynamix	terrain. And its multiple charac	
	tore and cue.	

tomization options offer a huge variety of playing styles. So when I heard that TRIBES 2 was going to be even bigger and better, I had to see for myself

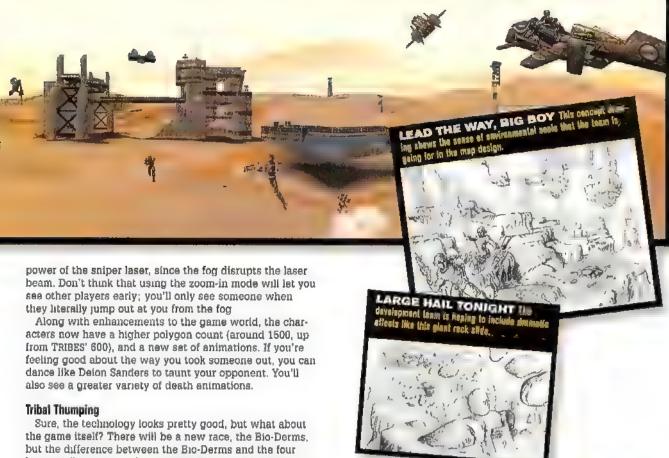
The Great Outdoors

Unlike the games in this month's cover story, TRIBES 2 isn't designed to revolutionize gaming. The development team, based in Eugene, Oregon, just wants to create a great game and incorporate features that weren't possible the first time around. The goal is not to reinvent the wheel, but to make it bigger and faster.

They've started with an all-new game engine. Although TRIBES' outdoor engine was good, TRIBES 2 has already echpsed it. The ground terrain looks a lot smoother and more natural, instead of like a series of blocky polygons. Also, there are more natural shapes on the landscape; the mountains and hills have been accented with spires, arcs, and other geological formations.

Fog is a major new landscape feature, adding more to the game than just atmosphere. The development team felt that sensor-jamming packs were understilized in the first game, so the fog now makes sensor power and visibility more important. Not only does a sensor jammer completely mask someone in the fog, it also negates the The Tribes Return to a Bigger,
Badder World by Thierry Nguyen





Sure, the technology looks pretty good, but what about the game itself? There will be a new race, the Bio-Derms, but the difference between the Bio-Derms and the four human tribes are mostly cosmetic. There will be more variety between the worlds this time; the five world types at the moment are Bio-Derm, Lush, Lava, Desert, and Mud Not only do the worlds look different, but the development



the development
team is aiming to
have varying
environmental
effects The lava
world will have
treacherous
patches of lava;
the lush world
will be covered in
fog and trees;
and it'll be hard
to trudge along
the muddy landscape

Water will also

affect gameplay While there won't be submersible vehicles, going underwater will offer certain tactical advantages. The physics will be different underwater, energy weapons aren't useful, and it adds another hiding place. The team plans to tune the water physics so that you can skip discs across it.

Many of the mission types will be derived from the previous game, combined with a variety of new ones. This time structures will have multiple entrances, reducing the stalemates that often occurred around TRIBES buildings. Another tweak to CTF will be multiple flags, adding a





much more strategic angle to the action.

For now, the team is concentrating on the engine and the environment. Weapons were still on the drawing board; they're brainstorming ideas for new weapons while giving the originals an overhaul. There will be more vehicles this time, with three air and four ground, up from the three air-only vehicles in the previous game. They've also tweaked the interface and the shell; there will be a built-in HTML viewer, so gamers can check TRIBES info on the Web without having to leave the game. The server listing will also have a "buddy list" tracker, so if you have a good gaming groove going with some players, you can easily find them again. They're also working on improving the station interface, so that gamers can get in, grab the necessary equipment, and pop back out without much delay. For those who've seen Allens the team plans on implementing a Command Station interface that allows a commander to view everything his teammates are doing, and give them even more direct, command-level orders.

After seeing TRIBES 2, it's clear that Dynamix knows how to improve upon their initial success. The engine already looks great, and I'm excited at the prospect of playing with the new toys in an even larger world. By next summer, I'm sure you'll be suiting up to get back into the fray

Tribes Extreme

TRIBES EXTREMS is accountially
TRIBES 1.5. The game, which is
I supposed to come out in the next
few weaks, uses the existing TRIBES
engine and will cost about \$10 for
owners of TRIBES. What good is K? It
adds accessibility, enhancements, and
a wide variety of mission types for
TRIBES fans.

TRISES EXTREME answers some of the criticism aimed at TRISES by including a single-playor campules. If it is three chapters with four missions per chapter. Add to that 12 new training missions, and you already, here 24 fed missions to play offline. Thera will be a new tritle called the Grievers, and the campaign to row you into the war between the Grievers and the four original from. The development team hopes that the single-playor game and training missions will have newed are a fighting chapter calline.

The other major insprovement deals with the Al tots. You can either use them to train in the multiplayer missions, or use them as plack-hitters for team matches. When setting up you game, you can give each bet a pre-defined role such as "sniper" or "hir ret-repoir," and they'll go through their routines. Enterprising gamers can also meally the bet acripts to make custom bots,

Finally, Talats EXTREME will fatagrate a toll of words and maps, to

make a complete TRIESS package. One buck mad is "(Cil the Rablic," pinere the Rablic, it is player with the Hay and you were points by temping hold of the Hay Or "fronte" where instead of dying, you get frezen. Being frezen locks you into observer made, and you saly become unifozen when your entire team is frezen, or when servence puts the unifozengewhen your entire team put out an open call for mud developers, so expect a lot of good exer-created content on top of the material provided by Bynamic.





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Neverwinter Nights

BioWare Follows up Baldur's Gate With an Even More Ambitious D&D Game

By P. Stefan "Desslock" Janicki and Mark Asher

ungeons & Dragons, the pen-and-paper roleplaying system that started it all, triumphantly returned to computer gaming last year with the release of BioWare's BALDUR'S GATE. While its commercial success virtually ensured that we'll see future

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS	
GENRE: Role-playing - RELEASE DATE: Q4 'OD	
PUBLISHER: Interplay Productions	
DEVELOPER: BioWare Corp.	

BALDUR'S GATE
titles, BioWare
and publisher
Interplay
Productions have
for months been
working on an

even more ambitious D&D game, NEVERWINTER NIGHTS.

Although commandeering the name used by an onlineonly D&D game that ran on America Online for years, this NEVERWINTER NIGHTS is a completely original product that will emulate tabletop D&D's modular system.

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS will be released as a stand-alone single- and multiplayer game, but will also come with an editor to allow players to create their own adventures.

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS will allow players to host multiplayer games themselves, as opposed to relying on an online service like AOL. Gamers with the aspiration and hardware could conceivably run their servers persistently permitting a few dozen players to perpetually adventure in a customized gaming-world module, happily devoid of the monthly charges associated with online games like EVERQUEST.

Come to My Bungeon

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS will also bridge the gap between computer and tabletop RPGs by allowing one or more players to serve as a session's Dungson Master. DMs will be able to assume control over non-player characters and creatures, moderate combat, and even the consequences of a character's death. DMs will also be the only players able to pause gameplay, which otherwise flows in real-time.

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS will use the upcoming 3rd Edition D&D rules, which re-establish a few 1st Edition character classes, remove xenophobic race limitations (and restore that charismatic mongrel, the half-orc, as an available character race), and merge D&D's multi-classed and dual-classed systems into one rebalanced regime

Players control a single character, who can be conscripted from any of the races and character classes permitted by the new D&D rules. Evil alignments and chaotic behav-

Newcomers to D&D should be lured by the game's accessible interface and attractive graphics, while veterans will be enticed by the inclusion of over 200 spells and monsters, all with traits lifted exclusively from the core D&D rules.

DISCIPLES

ONLY THE CHOSEN WILL SURVIVE

game Total Steve Lieb

Turn-based fans should definitely keep an eye out for the one."

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tor are available role playing options, but DMs will be able to establish whether or not player characters can harm each other, in order to prevent problem players from disrupting a game

While the developers are aiming to create a computer RPG as open-ended as its tabletop counterpart, they recognize that the anonymity of online gaming invites abuse. To grant gamers some assurance that another player isn't using an artificially-enhanced character, a "character vault" will be maintained by the developers Characters can be stored within the vault between adventures and may be removed freely to embark upon quests, but can only be restored to the vault with experience and valuables that could have reasonably been accumulated during their absence.

Ideally, the vault will grant stored characters some legitimacy, even if mischievous hackers find ways to bypass its security. BioWare hopes there'll be little incentive to do so, since gamers can opt to store characters on their own computers, and have the freedom to create modules stocked full of empowering artifacts and godly experience points.

Have it Your Way

Instead of recycling the BALDUR'S GATE "Infinity" engine, NEVERWINTER NIGHTS will use the "Omen" engine BioWare developed for the upcoming MDK2. The engine retains the isometric, top-down viewpoint of BALDUR'S GATE, but is fully 3D and allows players to rotate or magnify the camera's perspective. The engine is also resolution independent, permitting gamers to crank up graphical details if they have the hardware. While the hand-drawn backgrounds of BALDUR'S GATE will be missed, NEVERWINTER'S tile-based system will allow the developers and creative gamers to create additional modules.

Newcomers to D&D should be fured by the game's accessible interface and attractive graphics, while veterans will be enticed by the inclusion of over 200 spells and monsters, all with traits lifted exclusively from the core D&D rules. Characters can evolve up to a demigodish 20th level, which should appease the gamers who consider constant character advancement a role-playing game prerequisite. Characters will be able to wield two weapons simultaneously, disarm opponents, use targeted attacks, and engage in hand-to-hand combat – all in accordance with the new D&D rules

What's missing? Not much. Characters won't be able to swim, which is an experience that shouldn't be readily available to chainmail-laden adventurers in any event. The developers are bursting with so much enthusiasm over their latest project—the game's online discussion board is jammed daily with fresh commentary—that it's difficult not to anticipate a truly innovative role-playing experience from NEVERWINTER NIGHTS.

WHO GOES THERE? The capilles of the female werrier each light on this forest anvironment in MEVERWINTER MIDUIS. GOIN' DOWNTOWN REFERWATER HIGHTS sees the limen angles that Economy developed for MOX2. The top-slown viewpoint is by 28 and allows players to retate or magnify the comers's perspective. LE MENU The game's radial mone system offers oncy second in the main game centrals without seconing the serion.

Neverwinter at GenCon

EVERWINTER NIGHTS was officially announced at the GenCon convention in Milwaukee this August (see story in Read.Me this month), and in between stuffing ourselves with bratwursts we checked the game out at Interpley's booth

Although the game is early in its development, the basic engine is in place. What struck us about BioWare's Omen engine wasn't how profty it was (and it was quite striking), but how smoothly it ran, Panning the camera was effortless, rotating and zooming in and out without a hiccup. The light-sourcing

seemed perfect when a character jaunched megic missile spells for moved while carrying a torch.

One nifty new effect that the Omen engine inderporates is motion blur. Think how comic book artists draw action shots were sword blurring as it's being swung, and you'll get an idea of what the motion blur effects look like in NEVERWINTER NIGHTS.

It's a small touch, but it adds to the experience:

The interface is also striking. It uses a radial ment, which looks like a clock dist, and is invisible most of the time, appearing only when you right-click to interact with something. It's an elegant solution, leaving the acress 1,00% free of interface clutter 95% of the time.

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Final Fantasy VIII

Square Finally Fixes Past Problems and Brings Back the Love by Thierry Nguyen

ove doesn't work. At least, not in computer games. Every time it's attempted, it ends up being trite, clichéd, or worse. Yet, in FINAL FANTASY VIII, SquareSoft is ready to seriously tackle the theme of love and romance, in addition to the technical problems that plagued their previous PC effort in the role-playing series.

The heart of every FINAL FANTASY game is the plot, but it's hard to talk too much about it without spoiling the game. Let's start with the protagonist: Squall. He's a student in The Garden, a premier military academy. As the game opens, Squall is attempting to pass an exam that will let him be part of an elite soldier unit known as SeeD. Once he

ARIJEFANTASY VIU Genre: RPG • Release Date: Q4 '90 Publisher: Squareea Developer: Squaresoft enters SeeD, he gets involved in a massive war between the country Galbadia and the rest of the world. Looming in the background during all llus is a witch known only as Idea.

As in any other Square game, you can expect a healthy dose of intrigue, betrayal, and death of beloved characters.

Deformed No Mare

The first immediate difference between FFVIII and FFVIII is the consistent character design. Gone are the Super-Deformed characters (a Japanese art style where big heads are placed on little bodies) of FFVII—now the characters are all rendered more realistically

Both the battle and magic systems have also been greatly overhauled. The one key change is the Draw system, which lets you extract spells and abilities from the enemies you encounter. Once you've "drawn" a spell from a target, you can either cast it immediately or store it for later. There are no magic points or spells you can permanently learn; you're always drawing spells from the enemy

Also, there is a new twist to the summoning spells (called Guardian





Forces)—experience, Each of your Guardian Forces gains XP and will earn the right to learn abilities. Some abilities strengthen the existing attack, others open up new attack methods SquareSoft wants to create a sense of growth for your Guardians, as well as a bit of customization. Unlike FFVII, you don't get Guardians by grabbing material or whatnot; you either earn them in the course of the story, or you have to defeat the Guardian in order for it to serve you.

Another alteration to the battle system is a fighting-game influence. Some of the battles in FFVII felt like they were on autopilot, as you always used the same options over and over again. Now, you can enhance your attacks with proper timing. For example, if you tap the special attack key just

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enin Wissember (Car (Lu) Ilmer Co 1-38 Amin Feren Bert

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as Squall swings his Gunblade, he'll fire it in addition to swinging it. One of the characters, a martial arts expert named Zell, has several fighting-game-style combination moves that he can pull off in battle

A few things remain the same from FFVII. The save-game scheme is the same (within specific dungeons and areas, there are save points, but out in the overworld, you can save anywhere), and the control interface is still geared primarily

toward the gamepad crowd. For vehicles, you'll ride a Chocobe for a bit, but you'll also get to drive a rental car and an aircraft called the RagnaRok

Flash to the Past

The development team has learned their lesson from the FFVII port, and has either corrected, or worked around its technical flaws. Graphics-wise, they have more rigorous testing methods, and they're better at using Direct3D then they were last year. Also, while they can't re-render all the 2D backgrounds (this would create a huge delay), they're using

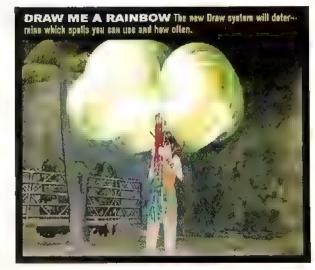


special filters to make sure they don't look as fuzzy or washed out as in FFVII. Musically, they are still probably going with the software synthesizer route, but they are looking toward using the emerging Downloadable Samples (DLS) idea, since many new PCI sound cards support DLS

The most visible improvements are the movies. They were formerly washed-out, stretched AVIs that lost their epic feel, now they're using a new movie format that preserves, and even enhances, the look of the original movies. Depending on your PC, the movies will play in either high- or low-resolution, but the difference between the two is hardly noticeable.

At press time, the core game was complete and playable, all it lacked were the movies and some text. The team hopes to go beta fairly soon and begin pounding out the bugs, for an anticipated release near the end of the year. Square looks like it has addressed the technical problems that plagued their previous PC release, allowing gamers who like a good story, and can appreciate console-style gameplay, to finally see what the FINAL FANTASY fuss is all about.







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DIAMOND

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Do It All in This Incredibly Ambitious Shooter by Thierry Nguyen

Rock

espite its name, SingleTrac isn't content with only one genre. Heck, they're planning to combine three genres into a single game. Normally, this is where I'd say "good luck" while rolling my eyes, but after a demonstration of their next game. ROCK, I really do wish



SingleTrac luck ROCK's most impressive ambition is the unprecedented free-

dom it will give gamers, allowing them to go easily from piloting a spacecraft, to manning a huge Mech-like assault robot, to running and gunning in a standard first-person shooter style. This game could set a new standard in FPS action gaming, especially in the multiplayer arena

Pick Your Poison

ROCK takes place in a post-apocalyptic future, with evil corporations, ragtag forces, evil mutants, yadda yadda yadda, blah blah blah. Okay, so it's pretty obvious SingleTrac isn't breaking new ground in the story-telling department, but we haven't exactly reached a point where people expect The Gulag Archipelago when they install the latest shooter. Besides, it's not the story that has the potential to hook gamers, it's the gameplay. Imagine a game where you can jump into a starfighter, doglight your way to a Martian plain, hop out, toss a grenade in a Mech to kill the pilot so you can claim the assault robot for your-

self, rampage across a warzone in your new weapons platform, and

finally jump out and

enter a building, killing

some guards before you

ROCK

GENRE Action - RELEASE DATE, Q3 'CO

PUBLISHER' GT Interactive Software

DEVELOPER: SingleTrag

CONTACT; www.singletrag.com

CONTACT: www.singletrac.com plant explosives to level $it - all \ of \ this \ without$ any load screens to stall the action.

While players are encouraged to take part in all the flying, meching, shooting fun, there will be three distinct sides with an emphasis on one of the three game types. The shooters among you will want to be playing as part of the ragtag Grunj Alliance, since soldiering is their forte. Those who prefer mechanized mayhem Mechwarrior-style will want to be a member of the meticulously-classy Imperial Directorate, who love their Robotic Assault Vehicles (RAVes). Finally, if you're just really sneaky and you love Top Gun, then you're a candidate for the DarkShyne Technocracy, a mutant race who like stealth and air power

Each organization has a 10-mission single-player campaign where you'll have command of up to eight AI squadmates. These squadmates all have defined roles (i.e., singler, RAVe pilot, aviator, demolitions), and better yet,



REVIEWING THE TROOPS Each laction in the game sports a different look: The Corporate shock troops run heavy on the chrome, the Grunj rebots wear whatever they can get their hands on, and the sleatify DarkShyne dress so as not to be noticed.

they all gain experience from mission to mission. Take the same team with you from mission to mission, and it will grow increasingly deadly. This ragtag band will also have a total of 19 units (RAVes and spacecraft) to choose from. In fact, the AI even divides itself up into commanders and soldiers. For example, an AI commander can pilot a RAVe and be in charge of the three footsoldiers tasked with escorting it.





PO CD-ROM

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(III corr



The missions range from a simple base assault to a grand battle between two massive carriers. How SingleTrac is able to make an engine that renders spacecraft dogfights, mechanized slugfests, foot soldier shootouts, and epic space carriers all at once is beyond me. Without getting into acronym-laden technobabble, let's just say it all works. The environment is quite detailed and accurate; carriers have functional (and usable) launch bays, turret stations, and barracks, while every building on the landscape can be demolished under enough firepower (no more hiding in buildings). All of this will be happening on a backdrop that ranges from the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter to the planet surfaces themselves.

Communal Catastrophe

Teamplay is even more important than in other games. Let's say you have a team of five. Within a single dropship, you can be the pilot, two teammates can be turret gunners, and the last two are the payload – fired out of the dropship in a special torpedo they can guide themselves, plunging into a breach point to invade the enemy. Also, different player types will have different items, with the distinct player types and the various spacecraft and RAVes, balance will be a very important thing.

All the campaign missions can be played to operatively; other multiplayer plans include free-for-alls and a "Hunted" scenario, where one team must survive while the other tries to assassinate a specific target on the opposing team

One balance-detail we immediately liked was demolitions. A demolition expert can lay down an explosive charge that can take down buildings. If you're the victim of the attempted sabotage, and you have the right equipment, you can defuse the bomb. Just break out the wire clippers, point your crosshair at the wire you want to cut, and pray. Cut the wrong wire the first time, and the timer speed doubles. Cut another wrong wire, and, well, consider enlisting elsewhere. If that wasn't enough pressure, the concussive force of a nearby blast can knock off your wire-clipping aim.

SingleTrac is also giving the gamers all the tools needed for creating cut scenes and missions. Enterprising designers can make entirely new maps and mission objectives, while aspiring film directors can create their own cut scenes, complete with voices

SingleTrac is embarking on what could be called a kitchen-sink game. Normally, I'd be on the apprehensive side, but when I got to actually see the whole act of flying, bailing out, stealing a RAVe, wreaking haves, then getting back on foot to blow up a building, I lost all apprehension It's still a long way off, but ROCK looks like it can do it all without losing the focus on gameplay.

Five Nasty Tricks to Pull in RUCK 1. Crush your friends under your RAVe's feet. 2. Level an examy building while they're still as it, and watch their bodies fly from the wreckage. 3. Walt for someone to try to defuse a bessh, and drop a small granada nearby to disrupt his concentration. 4. Snipe the pilot of a troop transport just to see, the passaugers try to ball out before it crust es. 5. Use the BarkStyne Scout to leser-designate a player (instead of a building) for a heavy ordinance Banshoe strike.

Targer sited 500 meters out wind = 5 knots out of the west a such Elines & the MAGAZINE If the last one misses, sae Znd one WON IT

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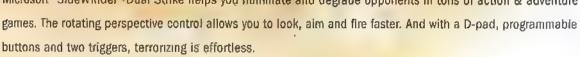
Apaing Simulation

DO UNTO YOUR OPPONENTS BEFORE THEY DO UNTO YOU.

www.microsoft.com/sidewinder









Firaxis Recreates the Bloodiest Day of the American Civil War by Mars Dultz

Sid Meier's Antietam!

A lthough American forces sustained grievous casualties at Omaha Beach, Iwo Jima, and the Ardennes during WWII, it was some 80 years prior – at the Battle of Antietam – that the nation suffered its greatest losses for a single day of combat, 11,000 men. Now Firaxis Games, with

FIRE! The red streaks and numerical fire indicators show how much fire power you're directing at the enemy.

CITIZEN SOLDIER Valiko BETTYESUARI, each unit will be dresset in historically accurate garti.



SET IN STONE The Interface has been improved with a stone wall across the hottom and simplified command hars on the left.



the aid of newly created Breakaway Games, plans on portraving the epic battle of the Republic using a refined version of their popular SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG! game engine and a little help from the dead

According to Joe Balkoski, noted Civil War historian and historical consultant on ANTIETAMI, all sorts of subtle Improvements have been incorporated into the game that will great ly affect the way the battle will be fought "For one thing, the terrain in ANTIETAM! is very different from the type depicted in GETTYSBURG!" he says. While Gettysburg was a relative-



ly open battlefield, Antietam had very unique terrain, which we mapped meticulously – from the creeks and bridges to the cornfields and infamous sunken road." Other enhancements include new unit classifications, and detailed uniforms for every regiment that took part at the battle

The interface has also been upgraded. The command bars have been reworked with fire effectiveness indicators, which will show players how their units are performing in battle.

ANTIETAMI will also feature a beefed-up AI as well as added realism effects. For instance, artillery will now be able to fire

into tree lines or at units on the move, and can be ordered to hold fire until the enemy is within canister range.

ANTIETAMI will include the previously unpublished manuscript of Ezra Carman, commander of the 13th New Jersey Volunteer infantry, which vividly recounts every aspect of the battle as seen through the eyes of a Civil War veteran. With his help, Firaxis was able to establish the exact location of each individual unit and the circumstances leading up to the fateful Union attack along the sunken road

Finally, players will be able to re-fight the entire battle, or play any of the 20-plus scenarios in the game, which will include several full and half-day battles as well as a wide variety of historical variants. ANTIETAM! will also ship with a random scenario generator that will select one of four types of engagement based partially on the player's track record

So, while it's still a couple of months off, ANTIETAM! is shaping up to become a fine wargame, and a fitting testament to the bloodiest battle America has ever fought (ACC)

5 THINGS

SIO MEIER'S ANTIETAM

PUBLISHER: Firaxis Games

DEVELOPER: Breakaway Gamea

GENRE: Waryame . RELEASE DATE: 04 '99

You Should Know About Antietam!

1. Anticiani is being developed by Sreakaway Sames in accordation.

with Firaxis, the same falks who created GETTYSBURN.

2. This game was't require GETTYSBURG! to play it. —

3. Jee Balkoski, author of "Royand the Beachtean" and designer of LEE Vs. 98441, is serving as a bistorical consultant.

4. Unitie GETTYSBURGI, players will be able to re-light the collect Battle of Antictam from start to finish.

5. Annerant will only be sold on Firaxis' Web site: www.firaxis.com.

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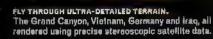
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TAKE THE CONTROLS OF B USAF JETS. Front Vietnam-era jets like the F-4 Phantom, to tomorrow's F-22, you'll fly the world's greatest alroraft.





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You wake aboaird the Von Broun with a mind-altering implant in your brain and no memory of recent events. As you wanded the dark, serial decks of the derelict spacecraft, you discover an alter material is slowly taking over the ship feeding upon the flesh of your former comrades, eaving zombles and corpses in its wake. Behind the engulfing terror, you sense the presence of the evil cyber-being, SHODAN. She is seductive and sinister. And she pulls all the strings in the most chilling role playing game ever. Enter Shodan's terrifying world to discover her ultimate plan — or die trying. For all the gary details, visit www.lglass.com

Jane's F/A-18

hird wire. Call the ball. Bolter, holter, holter! Utter these phrases to flight sim enthusiasts and you just might see them drool. After all, these words mean only one thing... Carrier Ops. The same team that produced last year's highly acclaimed JANE'S F-15 has now developed an in-depth naval aviation simulation. This holiday season, you'll get a chance to fly the plane that will be the cornerstone of the Navy's defense policy well into the 21st century: the F/A-18E Superhornet.

Producer Greg Kreafle's team has had over a year to incorporate all of F-15's strengths while trying to eliminate its weaknesses. "Think of it as F-15 Plus," Kreafle says. "In F-15, we have pilots flying realistically in a non-accelerated

JANE'S F/A-18

DENRE: Simulation . HELEASE DATE, Q4 '89

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

DEVELOPER: Ejectronic Arts. Hunt Valley

time mode for a half hour to an hour, just to get to their first way point Well, that wasn't any fun With F/A-18, fly-

ing them off the carrier means they'll be closer to the action." He adds, "The key word is accessibility. We've applied that to every part of the game."

Indeed, the real F/A-18E is a far more user-friendly aircraft than the F-15, so accurate plane modeling alone makes the sim accessible to a wider audience. For example, the avionics are greatly simplified, making it easier to operate the weapon systems. As Kreafle says, "It has a simpler interface because the state of the art has advanced over the past 25 years since the F-15 was designed, so we get all the benefit of that by trying to recreate it as realistically as possible."

Many simulations, F-15 included, offer a casual flight model as well as an authentic one. With the Superhornet, there's no need. The real aircraft is that much easier to fly. The plane has greater "doglighting" capabilities than the

You Should Know
About Jane's F/A-18

The new lane's manual is they and it has a senter in read Look for over 400 pages!

2. Ever 2,5 railien square kilometers will be made on u.s.e.s. data:

3. By one giant company an imprime the action it three separate phases.

3. The Superharout is no speed demon. The F-15 is actually faster, but the F/A-18 is more maneuverable.

5. The convaliation of JANE'S A-10 has no beering whatsoever an IANE'S F/A-18.

Jane's Gettin' Serious... About Being Easy

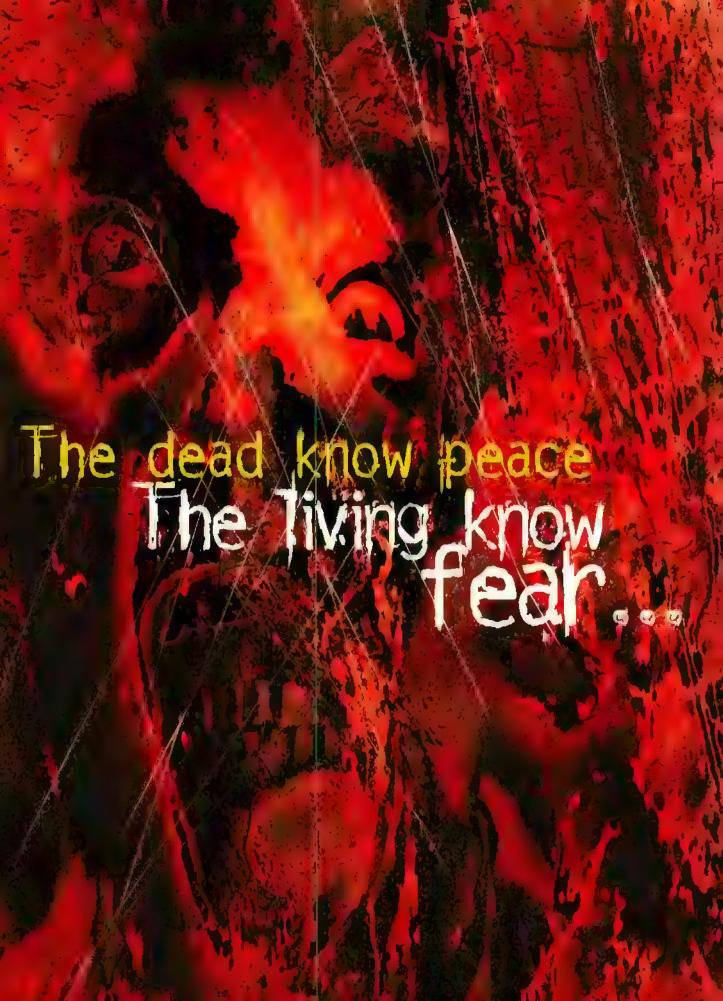
By Gordon Berg

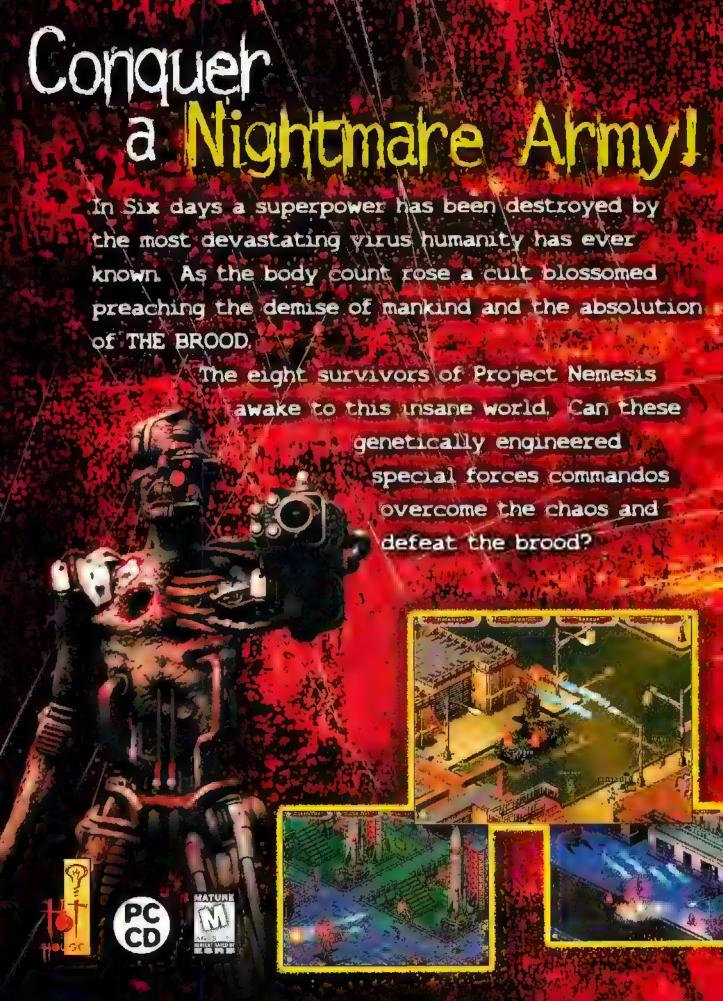
F 15, and it also has some built-in constraints to ensure the pilot won't lose control. "You can't over-G the airplane," explains Kreafla. "You'd be lucky to pull 7-1/2 Gs. Beyond that, the system relinquishes control authority. You can't depart flight with it, either." That's true. In the beta I tested, I was unable to put the plane into a spin, managing only a brief stall that quickly corrected itself.

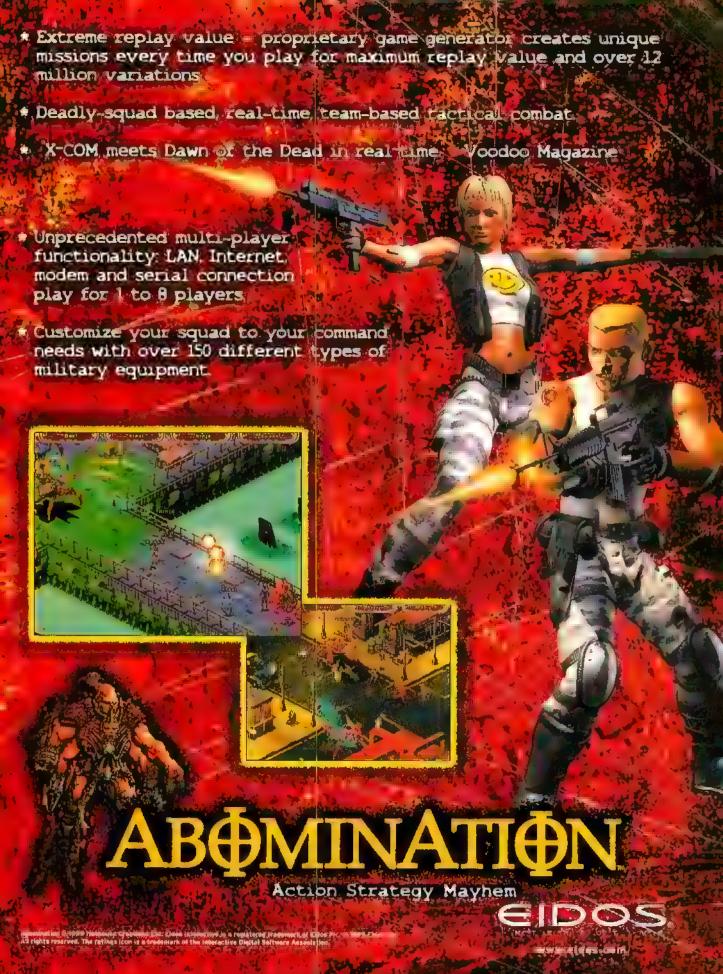
As far as the campaign goes, there is much greater emphasis on player immersion. The missions you fly are interspersed with video clips about 15 seconds in length, which indicate your progress via positive or negative feedback. The end result is a story that unfolds to truly involve the player in the action

Yes, the number of F-18 simulations in the marketplace are starting to rival those of the F-22, but we're taiking classic Jane's stuff here. I, for one can't wait CCC









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3DO"

Volition Puts Even More Gloss on Their Polished
Space Sim Franchise by Thierry Nguyen

FreeSpace 2

he first FREESPACE was the best space sim to come around in a long time. It was extremely well polished and had great production designs, but ultimately it felt derivative. Once I got a version of FREESPACE 2 and saw what the designers were up to, I was delighted to find much that may set the sequel apart from the pack

EALESPACE 2
GENRE Space Sim
RELEASE DAYE: Q4 '89
PUBLISHER: Interplay
DEVELOPER, Volition

The plot this time is the return of the Shivans during a period of, oh, let's say "civil unrest." While the Terrans and the Vasudans allied in the previous

game, some rogue
Terrans decide to backtrack and go back to war
with the Vasudans. In the
first few missions, the
gamer is expected to
wonder about the morals
behind his missions.
Volition is going for a
firefact stary this time
around, rather than the
straightforward "big bad
allens invade, misyltem
ensues" plot.

At first, the graphics look the same Things soon change when you run into one of the names' features the nebulae.

Like nebulae in just about every other game, they'll mess around with your electrical system and make targeting enemy spacecraft difficult. Fortunately, in order to counter these nebulae effects, you can either call upon a special AWAC-style ship, or trae special hardware to keep a radar lock on enemies

Speaking of the ships, the other big improvement is the capital ship design. The big ships have been beefed up significantly, so that it's nearly impossible for a little fighter to take one out. Also, these capital ships have much more powerful weaponry – typically a few antifighter turrets backed up by one huge energy cannon. The development team wanted to make the prospect of destroying a capital ship a challenging thing, rather than the "line up torpedo and fire" from the previous game.

FREESPACE 2 looks like it will have the story, the spatial effects.

and the ship design to set it further apart from the original game and the rest of the space sim pack. If Volition puts a spit shine on FREESPACE 2, gamers may just see the creation of another viable space sim franchise, giving LucasArts and Origin some competition.





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Our Prayers Are Answered. Autoduel Has Risen by George Jones

Loose Cannon

robed editor sits in his office in the lotus position, hands outstretched before a bamboo altar, upon which is laid a sacred 5.25" floppy disk. The editor softly chants the name on this floppy, with the hope that in the same way dolphins hear Aqua Man's desperate pleas for companionship, some game designer will sense the editor's need and redesign a classic roleplaying driving game.

GENAE, Genro: Action/Adventure RELEASE DAYE, 03 '99 PUBLISHER: Microsoft DEVELOPER: Digital Anvil

Autoduel... Autoduel... Autoduel .. Auto-

It's finally happened. Someone has picked up the vibe That person - Tony Zurovec of CRUSADER: NO REMORSE fame - freely admits that his upcoming title, LOOSE CANNON, is a spiritual successor of sorts to AUTODUEL, the computer ver sion of the CAR WARS pen-and-paper RPG released by Origin in the 80s

With LOOSE CANNON, Zurovec is shooting for that elusive balance between

story, driving, and on-foot missions In this way, the game appears to be a cross between AUTODUEL, METAL GEAR SOLID, and THIEF than to previous games in this genre, such as INTERSTATE 82 or REDLINE.

You begin LOOSE CANNON as a bounty hunter in a west coast city, and over the course of the story you make your way through the midwest to the east coast. Law and order has broken down across the nation due to a serious economic downturn Lacking the funds to buy essential items like guns, the police call on freelancers to bring violent ends to criminal acts

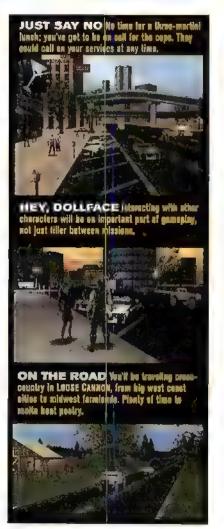
To earn money to improve your car, you cruise the city streets. Periodically, the boys in blue will request your help over the radio. Accept their offer, and you'll experiance the glory of LOOSE CANNON's combat engine, which offers realistic driving physics and emphasizes speed and cool weapons.

You'll also encounter combat when you're asked to courier packages between the major cities. Since the countryside has no protection whatscever, piracy reigns on these roads. At your disposal is an arsenal that would make any L.A. commuter drool: guns, rocket-launchers, and rear-mounted flame-throwers.

You eventually tap into a more detailed story with missions that will challenge you in different ways. In a mission that requires you to infiltrate an enemy base, for instance, you will have to sneak around an encampment, blowing away the tires on the

enemy cars. This way, when you make your way into the base, steal the technology you need, and make your escape, the bad guys won't be able to follow.

Zurovec firmly believes that paying closer attention to detail and developing a more interesting story, when combined with more open gameplay, will make LOOSE CANNON succeed where similar titles have failed [37]







OF ONE USE 2 QUARTERS



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QUAKE III ARENA

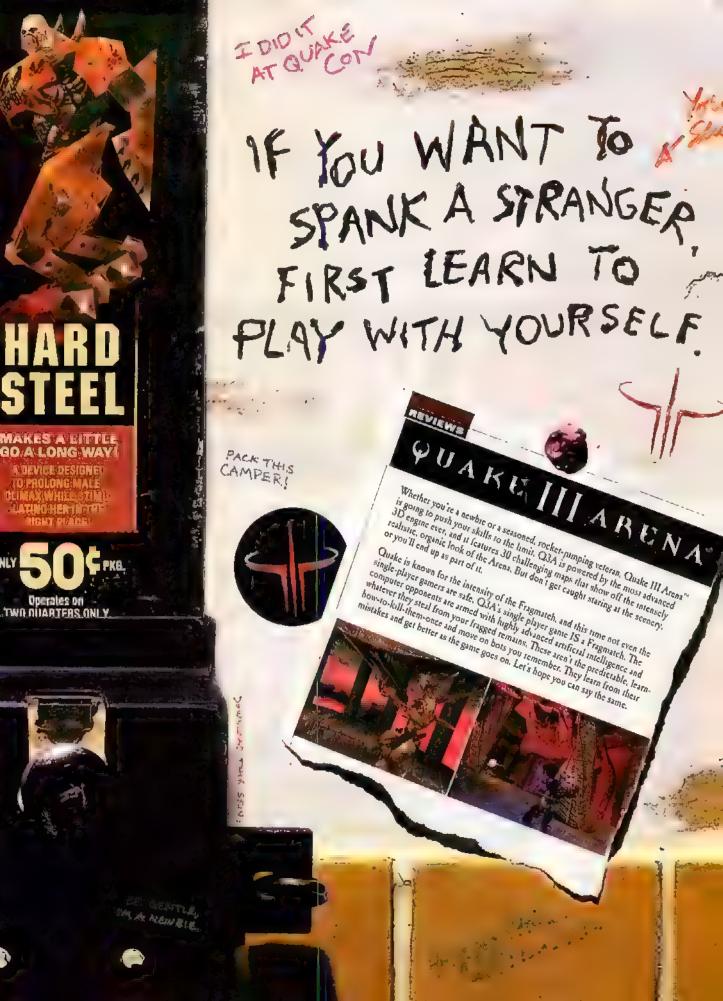


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Joplin's banshee wail tipped the emotional balance of rock. And Jobs' and Wozniack's gamble on the Apple took computing from a technological priesthood and put it into the hands of the people. Trailblazers like these reshaped the world in their image. They "thought different," and forced those who followed to do the same. And that's how we feel about the following five games. Whether through pioneering graphics technology, innovative new design concepts, or redefining what can be considered a game at all, these five will leave ripples that will be felt throughout the industry for years to come.

Chris Roberts Sets His Sights on the Big One by George

onsider Texas, a state so enamored with the enormous that even Austin, a city very low on the Texas-ometer, buys into the big. Wanting a bigger airport, this city chose not to simply expand their current facilities, but to build an entirely new airport five miles down the road.

This bigger-is-better mentality must be part of what keeps Chris Roberts in Austin. After all, it's a good fit—his favorite games are enormously large, epic, big-splash titles with high production values, envelope pushing technologies, and a massive sense of scale. Games like FREELANCER.

In FREELANCER Roberts is setting his sites on the holy grail of computer games. A game with unparalleled visual and cinematic style that is totally and completely open-ended but also features a compelling central story. And, oh yeah, it should also be fun and accessible to the masses.

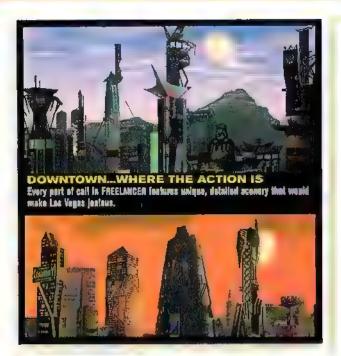


A FLYING START

FREELANCER's tone and visual over an allustrated imply and powerfully. The very first scene Roberts showed us—an overhead view of a bustling space port—emphasized the fact that, although this space sim uses plot and game-play elements that have existed since ELITE, Digital Anvil's take on the genre will be something special.

The spaceport, from which you assign yourself missions, outfit your ship with new weapons, trade goods, and peel away layers of the story, resembles nothing you've ever seen...in a computer game, at least. The sun sets and rises, ships





rates a sense of scale and attention to detail that will most likely set a new standard for virtual worlds. At one point, we flew around and through an enormous research station that seemed about 100 times the size of our ship. We also flew through a gorgeous, purplish gassy, lightening-strewn nebula that created a particularly serie effect. And in a scene that illustrated the amount of detail being put into the game, we flew past a fully operational ore-mining unit. As we flew up close, you could see the ship doing its ore-crunching—the large pincer hands breaking off chunks of ore, which were then sucked into the craw of the ship.

Eventually your lovely little sight-seeing excursion is going to get interrupted by space pirates or a rival house. Then you'll see another part of FREELANCER, one that takes a sharp turn from normal space combat Roberts and company are throwing out the joystick as a controller and focusing on making the game playable with a unique mouse-and-keyboard interface. This fits in squarely with the FREELANCER design team's mission of focusing on the purely fun parts of space combat, which means avoiding the constant 180-degree turning battles so common in space sims, where you

line up a bogey, pass them after narrowly avoiding a head-on collision, and repeat.

FREELANCER completely avoids this



CHRIS ROBERTS

"Sure, the intest 30 sheaters look pretly, but what new gampplay in they effer? Where are they taking the genre beyond having pratter

reems and more detailed characters? Tee many of the gome publishers seem to be going with sede bets; the intest sequel; a sports gome with the letest team state; an RTS game with a few different kinds of units; or another first-parson shooter that differs only in its lunk. I've been for more impressed with the game design that's been going on in the censule market. Games like METAL GEAR SOLIS and ZELDA 64 have really blown me away by their design and the way the technical goe-wist; factors are used to enhance gameplay. There have been a few exceptions in the PC biz: GRIM FAHOANGO and HALF-LIFE stood out last year."

by placing the fundamental ship maneuvering and navigation under the control of your Neuronet. You move your mouse around to target and fire on enemy ships, select your weapons, and fine-tune your position and velocity. Holding down the Shift key allows you to freelook with your mouse and fire on anything you see. Holding down the Control key allows you to take over the controls and maneuver your ship in any direction

The wildcard in all this is the Neuronet—part interface manager, part onboard computer, and part pilot. It serves as your navigational aid, allowing you to plot coordinates for travel and check on your cargo. More crucially, it performs critical maneuvers during combat and can be upgraded with a variety of increasingly effective tactics to make it more combat-ready.

Space fights consist of you blasting away with your mouse and ordering your ship into various maneuvers via the Neuronet. Want to get on a bogie's tail and blast him into dust? Select the *Trail* command, which will order your ship to attempt to get on the bogie's six. Getting pounded? Order your ship to *Evade*, and, depending on the quality of your Neuronet, you will alleviate the pain.

Most interesting about this new take on ship-to-ship combat is the almost DIABLO-style element of play FREELANCER sets up. As you gain more money, prestige, and power, you'll be able to power-up your Neuronet with new or upgraded maneuvers. Or buy entirely new Neuronets that are more advanced. Maybe you'll even discover amazingly sophisticated upgrades left behind by the ancient space-faring race who inhabited the area before you. You'll also be able to trade these maneuvers to your friends in the multiplayer game.

MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER

FREELANCER's multiplayer game, which will be sold separately from the main game, will be a massively multiplayer universe where thousands of players will be able to fly around and interact with each other in a variety of capacities. Digital Anvil envisions a dynamic, socially-oriented game that features the single-player game's politics and clans as a backdrop. This multiplayer game will also permit you to be allied with one of the main houses in the game, or to go it alone.

Digital Anvil is committed to maintaining a meta story that will keep the game more focused. At one point, you might log in and hear about a big war between the Kusari and House Liberty. This could mean several different things to you; you might want to join in the war effort as a paid mercenary. Or you might deduce that war around certain planets means that certain goods might command top dollar on that planet, and you'll hire some of your friends to escort you on a money-making trade mission.

Perhaps the coolest potential feature in multiplayer is the ability to own your own base. The game will feature a finite number of bases that can be taken over and controlled by human factions

The most unfortunate aspect of FREELANCER is the

fact that we'll have to wait until late 2001 to play it. KAD

CHRIS ROBERT'S GAMEOGRAPHY

fimas af lora Strika Commandae Vana Zoranandae las V

Genre: Action Release Date: Q4 '01 Publisher: Microsoft Developer: Digital Anvil

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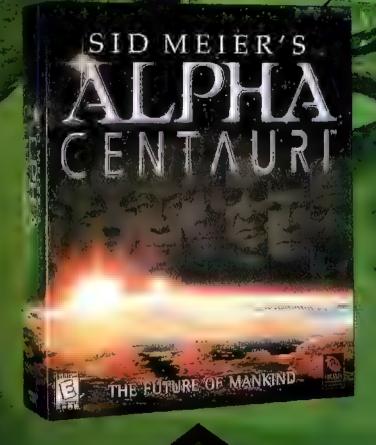
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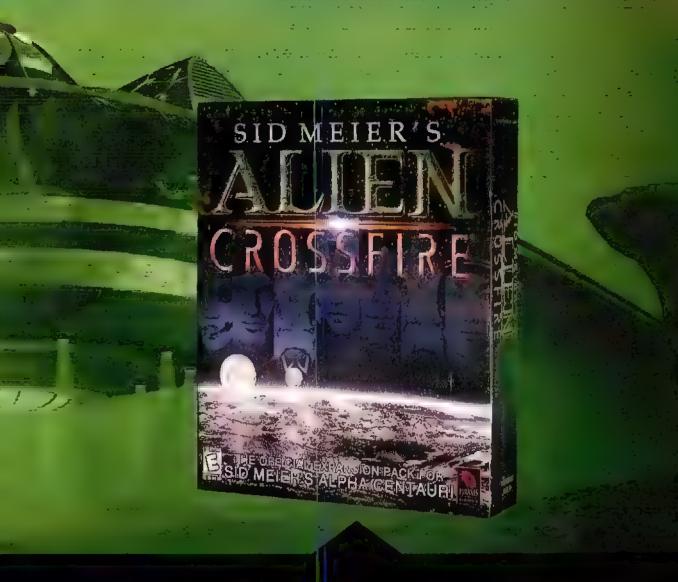
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"98%" (Highest review score ever awarded) – PC Gamer

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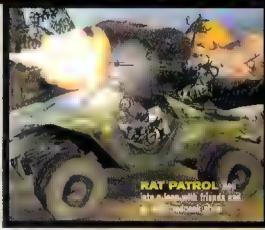
ALO's indoor environments are spectacular enough. Colored lighting pours in through stained glass windows; computer displays reflect off polished floors. The building's curved surfaces and seamless textures eradicate any semblance of the Legostyle architecture we've grown accustomed to in 90-degree-heavy 3D games. And then you step outside...

...where smooth, rolling green hills dominate the landscape, interspersed with cliff-walled canyons in the natirs of watersheds. Trees sway in the breeze. A waterfall plunges into a sparkling river. You can't make out a straight line anywhere, and the lush scenery seems to go on for miles.

HALO challenges the current conception of how beautiful a computer game can be. It could, in fact, redefine your conception of computer games. Why? Because this third-person-perspective action game features the finest 3D-game engine, character animation, and physics modeling we've ever seen. Such technology in the hands of a company long known for making fewer games at higher-than-normal quality levels is practically unfair.

WANT A JOINT?

Not satisfied with simply stunning terrain, Jason Jones creator of MARATHON and MYTH and the visionary and lead programmer for HALO – also aims to revolutionize the art of



character animation and physics modeling. Even at this early state in the game's development, his effort shines. Not only do vehicles and characters reflect light and cast dynamic shadows, they actually appear indescent. Even more impressive is the life-like way in which the models move.

In almost every game you've played before, the character animations are pre-canned – they're animated before you ever play the game. What you see when you walk forward or jump is actually a series of slightly different models, rapidly painted one after another, much like a three-dimensional flip book. Not so in HALO; Jones found a way to implement inverse kinematics, a technique for modeling human motion, in real time. Game models actually have a skeleton inside them with properties governing the movement of each joint. If your character is riding in a jeep and the driver hits the brakes, the inertia joits his skeleton forward in the seat, moving the character right along with it. At the same time, his

The **Closest** Thing to the Real Thing by Jesse Hiett



ed on many levels. The effects are mind-blowing

And then there are the vehicles themselves. Driving around in the game's jeep could practically qualify as a game in itself, due to the extremely-detailed physics model (think GRAND PRIX LEGENDS off-road) The vehicles' tires kick up pebbles and dust that change color depending on the terrain you're driving over. Bungle also displayed an indescent flying vehicle and hover tank that were equally impressive.

As one final demonstration of the engine's power, Jones zoomed the map way out so that the marine appeared as just a speck in the distance. Then he smoothly zoomed in, close enough that I could read an indicator on the side of the soldier's rule that showed how much ammo remained

The standard soldier's weapons are a pistol with a built-in

laser for painting targets, an assault rifle with an attached grenade launcher, and a machete for desperate situations. We also saw a cool zooming sniper rifle, a rocket launcher that leaves realistic smoke trails behind it that dissipate into the wind, a surface-to-air missile, a spear gun, and a funkylooking defoliator weapon. The aliens pretty much have an equivalent weapon for each purpose, but they shoot blue energy beams instead of familiar, earthly ordinance.

RING AROUND THE WORLD

Bungle's game design process is three-fold. First they fin-

ish their engine, then they play the hell out of the multiplayer game, and finally they move on to the single-player experience. Since the game recently began moving into phase two, much of the game's story has yet to be realized. But to be perfectly honest, the HALO engine is so amazing that Bungle could let us just run around the map banging two rocks together, and that would still entertain us for a while.

The setup for the game goes something like this. A space-faring transport vessel carrying about 1,800 humans, 800 of them marines, crash lands on a huge ring world that orbits a distant star. A theoretically feasible science-fiction construct, a ring-world is a thin ring of planetary mass thousands of miles across, with an inner surface coated with

desirable life-supporting essences like an atmosphere, dirt, trees, and water. Because of the ring-world's unique halo orbit at the Lagrange Point between a gas giant and one of its moons, this freakish world actually spins in place, with the resultant mertia creating an effect similar to gravity (remember the space station in 2001?)

An impressive artifact of tremendous significance, the ring appears to have been mysteriously abandoned by the time your ship crash lands on the surface. But much like a leftover slice of

pizza at the CGW offices, this kind of phenomenon fails to go unnoticed for long.

An alien race called the Covenant soon pops up. Technologically superior to humans, these

humanoids show up in great numbers to piller what they can from the ring. As you might guess, a full-scale war erupts between the humans and the Covenant.

the Covenant.

Since the humans are ill-equipped to face the Covenant head on, their only hope is to use guerrilla tactics. Given this fact, at times you'll be able to use all of the ahens' weapons and velucles against them. The other big problem you'll face in the early parts of the game is that all your mates and gear got spread out all over the ringworld in the chaos preceding the crash.

IN YER FACE OR FAR AWAY Character medels scale from 280–2000 polygons depending on how far sway they are from the viewer. Hete managing mini-gun.

FROM NAPKIN TO HAPPENIN' There are a let of stope and changing of hands between the artiet's concept and the final, tagtured 30 randel,

JASON JONES

STEVE JOBS LOVES HALO

HALO makes quite an impression the first time around, but it isn't exactly a surprise that something so revolutionary would come from Bungle. After all, these guys are known for being different. They do their own publishing; they have

always supported the Mac platform (HALO is no exception — Steve Jobs unveiled the game in his keynote speech at the recent MacWorld Expo); and they tend to make fewer and more innovative games than the rest of the pack.

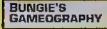
Although only in the nascent stages of development, it is readily apparent that HALO is a very big deal. With a solid record of setting high standards for their games, it is unlikely that Bungie will screw this one up. Which is why, of the five games we've selected, we feel HALO has the surest shot at changing gaming. It just looks too damn good. CGM

"There is a semmen saying among programmers, 'Ban't try and relativest the wheel.' Well, we try and relevant the wheel because key, the guy who invenies the wheel was really psycheli. We typically throw away all our code when we start a new project. I am much mere likely to start from service. If you den't understand what you're delay at the most basis level, you'll cover be able to imposite.

"Ever since QUAKE came out, similar first-person sheeters were all over the piace. You could hardly tell them apart. You won't be able in mistake HALO for mything else. The reason that we do this is because just like users get borne of recycled ideas, we get borne the same way. We didn't want to do another first-person sheeter or another real-time strategy game. We're also not really hig on analyzing the market or saying game x is really cool. We do what we think is cool because we laye it." Genre: Ac. in Release Date: Q4 2000 Publisher: Bungie Developer: Bungie

neet-o purple Hying unit. Lucking you will be able to commandoor

any vehicle (by ferce of course).



בופרק אַר בריומונוע*פיר* פונו. גנהנינהמווע

רוען בגינגועניל רוען בגינגועניל

MAHRIHUM

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MYTH: THE FALLEN LONDS MYTH 2



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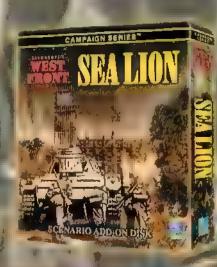


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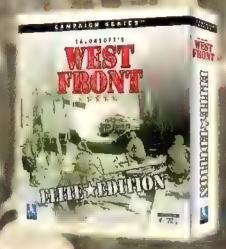


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CLASH IN THE DESERT: Rommel's Afrika Korps vs. Desert Rats

We Make History







Creating God in Your Own Image by Robert Coffey

eter Molyneux wants you to know something. He wants you to know that no matter what you've heard, BLACK & WHITE is not another "god game." BLACK & WHITE is a role-playing game.

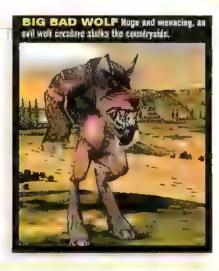
It just so happens that the role you're playing is God
The truth is, no one can cram all that is BLACK & WHITE
into one neat, limiting genre specification. The ambition
that is the soul of this game is far too unwieldy and
immense to be confined by some arbitrary term, stuffed into
a routine, user-friendly definition, BLACK & WHITE can't
help but resist, bursting loose from whatever elaboratelyfashioned pigeon holes we game journalists can construct

So what is BLACK & WHITE? It is, as Molyneux insists, a role-playing game. But it also happens to be 1) a god game; 2) an experiment in artificial life: 3) a strategy game, 4) the world's most surreal online chat program, and 5) an experience that evolves into an expression of who you are. If BLACK & WHITE can be summed up as one thing, it is in the way creator Peter Molyneux sees it "BLACK & WHITE is the closest I have ever come to what was in my imagination."

YOU'RE ALL A BUNCH OF ANIMALS!!!

IN THE BEGINNING

The game opens with an idyllic world, a tiny island practically glowing with lush vegetation. Your goal is simple: Get the whole world to believe in you and worship you as their god. You the player are manifested as an elegantly simple, all powerful hand hovering above the earth. Not wanting to break the illusion of the gameworld with buttons, tabs, and menu screens, the designers have made the hand the entirety of your interface. You'll grab spells from your citadel and cast them with a wave, and you'll move through the world by "grabbing" parts of



the landscape and "pulling" the world until your destination reaches you. While you cannot interact directly with the primitive tribes peppering the landscape, you can influence their lives indirectly. Spells allow you to rain down literal manna from heaven to feed starving tribes or to rip their fragile villages with vicious ribbons of lightning. Either approach will convince the tribesmen that there is something greater out there, and they will begin to worship you, either out of fear or out of adoration, and therein lies the heart of the game. Do you model yourself after Kali, the Indian black goddess who ate her own children, or the more benevolent, Christian New Testament God?

It's the sort of decision games have rarely addressed. Just as every moral choice you make in your life shapes and molds your existence, so will it in BLACK & WHITE. Live a life of callous evil and the gameworld becomes a blighted environment, scarred with volcame fissures, while your place of

power becomes an increasingly forbidding place. Nurture and care for your worshippers and the world flourishes, your palace growing to resemble a fairytale ideal

CHILD OF GOD

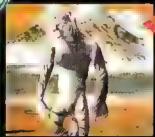
The most obvious expression of your morality comes in the

form of your creature, the only living being over which you can exert any direct control. After you've successfully won

over your first village and have started to amass some power, you'll discover three non-human entities: a passive cow, a neutral ape, or an aggressive tiger. After choosing one of these creatures, it is your responsibility to teach it. An enormous bundle of unchecked id, your creature is entirely dependent upon your direction to learn how









CLANSMEN of the villages and potential worship new har to's given around specific tribal themes specifies Native Americans, Aztecs, or 1965, Oilts to live in the world, Reward and punishment are the tools you'll use to shape your developing avatar, for example, should your hungry creature consume a villager, you can smack it to let it know your displeasure That won't be the end of it. however, because you'll need to tickle its belly and pat it when it later picks up a villager, considers eating it, then lets your worshipper free. Of course, you could do the opposite. training your creature to eat everyone it sees. As the creature balances its desires with what you teach it, a personality begins to emerge.

The creature is a marvel of AI programming, learning not only through the application of your firm hand but by observation as well. It watches you, learning to use your favorite spells. As the creature adopts your beliefs, it becomes capable of acting in your stead. Capable of making its own observations, your creature can travel to a new village, realize the

scar that lasts the lifetime of your creature.

THE HIGH ROAD OR THE LOW ROAD?

While the struggle between good and evil molds your creature and shapes the world, so does it direct gameplay. The game constantly confronts you with decisions as well as gauging your behavior across 11 sliding scales, rating you in terms of adventurousness, aggressiveness, curiosity, and more. For example, a more benevolent deity may be faced with the task of rescuing a villager who's become lost, while a more punishing god will have opportunities to seize things by force

Players will have the chance to share their experiences in some of the most

original online play devised. Budding delties can compete in a more traditional strategy game, pitting their spell set and creatures against each other. What is interesting here is that you use the creature from your saved game online; anything that happens to it will be carried back to your ongoing solo campaign.

Even more

remarkable is Molyneux's plan for BLACK & WHITE's online community, where players will be able to take their creatures online to interact with each other in a primarily non-combative setting. The creatures will learn from each other – they could pick up bad habits, or they might learn a new, special attack. Again, this new knowledge will be carried back to the single-player game where you'll have to deal with their slightly-altered personality.

BLACK & WHITE should simply be like no other game, ever Yes, it's graphically gorgeous, but it's the free-flowing, individualized play that is most tantalizing. It's an awful lot of ambition to shoehorn onto one CD-ROM, but if anyone can do it, Molyneux and Lionhead Studios can. [CCI]



people are starving, then start casting food spells. Moreover, your creature may then entertain the populace, playing with them or teaching them to dance, all without direction from you. Even more remarkably, the creature is able to form opinions based on your tutelage — you can teach him not to destroy life by sparing fisherman when faced with hostile tribes but by actively seeking out the leaders

Just as your philosophy is painted across the landscape, so is it reflected in your creature. Evil creatures take on menacing forms, all tooth and claw, literally smoldering with malice. Good creatures glow with saintly goodness. With creatures growing fat or skinny, weak or strong, no two creatures should look the same, especially considering a damage system that models every every cut and gash, leaving a

PETER MOLYNEUX

"After I had started the davign of BLACK & WAITE, we all got tegether and thought about the things we would need to create this game. We looked at each other and thought that we could never achieve these geals. But the number of cool features already in BLACK & WHITE show how high we have managed to push the technology anvelope — the Al, the interface, the 10 angles, and the sound engine.



Still, I besolutely 8m't consider this to be the definitive word on "god games." All games have much more in them yet to be discovered. While the complexity of the level of detail in BLACK & WHITE marks a big step forward. It still could be improved upon.

"I keps to feeter a large entire community. There will simply be no other experience like BLACK & WHITE GATHERING, because of the diversity and individuality of all the creatures. At the moment my creature is bordering on the very

avil side, but my excuse for this is that I have to abuse him and the world around him to task the pane.

In the end, this is

in the end, this is the scarlest project i have ever undertaken in my life."

PETER MOLYNEUX

MOLYNEUX GAMEOGRAPHY

PORDIOUS
POWERMORDER
MACE CARTT
SYRUCIAL
MADE CARREL 2
THEME BARK
DUNGSON KGS AL

Genre: Strategy Release Date: Q2 00 Publisher: Electronic Arts Developer: Lionneau Studios



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"The object of war is not to die for your country but to make the other bastard die for his."

--General George C. Patton

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hat is the appeal of the Skinner box that is the home? Security, tranquility, the sense of wholeness that can only come by surrounding yourself with those you love? Nah.

I think it's more along the lines of an old Steve Martin routine in which he entertained thoughts of raising a child and teaching said offspring all the wrong words for everything. He reished the thought of a child raising his hand the first day of school and asking, "May I moo dog-face to the banana patch?" This is the appeal of THE SIMS, the ultimate expression of the entire SIM franchise, a game where you can run amok with the lives of people, without running the risk of jail for child abuse through enforced idioglossia. Maxis, the company that practically created the so-called "software toy" genre with SIMCITY, is now preparing to doliver the ultimate toy – human lives







Social Darwinism Made Easy by Robert Coffey

BIRTH OF AN ARTIFICIAL NATION

Seven years ago, Maxis founder Will Wright was toying with an architectural sim, a nice little program that would let people create their own virtual dream homes. But other products (most notably SIMCITY 2000) distracted Wright and the rest of his team until about two and a half years ago. When production once again resumed on what Maxis had been calling SIM DOLLHOUSE it was with one

significant change

- the focus of the

game had moved from the aluminum siding of the homes to the lives of the dolls within

Anyone who's played any of the SIMCITY games knows just how pesky the virtual people inhabiting those digital metropolises can be; whether meaning about taxes or whining for a sports stadium, the "Sims" were a difficult





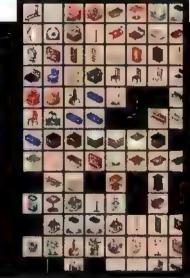
EVERYTHING BUT A PINATA
A variety of recreational ebjects will inclilitate social
interceurse and help you entertain your friends.
You'll even he ship to select the music you play on
the stame.

BETTER HOMES 4. GARDENS A simple, intuitive interface makes have creation a ance, with floor design, door and window placement, and surface factories readily applied with the click of a mouse.









MATERIAL
WORLD
Every object in THE SIMS
is programmed with
hekeviers, most mudflors, and even animations for your Sims.
Eventually, players will be
able to add their own
objects to the game.

LIVING IN THE

bunch to manage. Happily, they remain just as challenging in THE SIMS, thriving only when players tend to the minutest details of their lives. One of the most remarkable things about the game is how the design team has distilled gameplay to three basic functions – building, buying, and living – and yet managed to pack so much of the real world into those seemingly limiting specifications.

Every game starts with the creation of a new, single Sim, and deciding his or her sex, skin, and basic appear-

PLUMBING
THE DEPTHS
OF HUMAN
EXISTENCE
Reliking and banding
your trillets in working
order may sound brivial,
but Ignore them and
your Sims will suffer the
same way an unwashed,
bladder-bleated you,
would

ance before dividing points among basic character qualities, neatness, outgoing-ness, activity level, playfulness, and how nice you are. After that you dive right into the building portion of the game. Since you start with a set amount of money, you can either immediately purchase a model home or create your own. Designing your own biome is a remarkably intuitive process, using a simple click-and drag interface to plop down floors, walls, windows, doors, and anything else you feel your home needs. Gamers will have to resist the temptation to blow all their money on the biggest house they can afford right off the bat, since they'll have to furnish it as well; forget to set

aside enough money for a toilet and shower and life will get very Appalachian very fast

YOU CAN BUY HAPPINESS

Keeping your Sims content is the primary challenge. While big rooms and lots of windows will make them happy, the chief purveyor of pleasure comes in the form of material goods. Comfy chairs, aquariums, stereo equipment, hot tubs, and state-of-the art lutchens are just a smattering of the objects that

fill up your Sims' living space.

All the objects are programmed with attributes affecting both your Sims' mood and their behavior; this means that as you accumulate more stuff, you also acquire more options in terms of things to do Entertainment objects facilitate social interaction, giving visitors something to do when they drop by, while quality-of-life improvements such as plants just make your Sims happier. Of course, you'll have to maintain all these things - fail to water your plants and they'll die, bumming out your Sim. This amount of micro-management could be daunting, so you'll be able to hire gardeners to care for your lawn, while maids will tidy up the house.

Beyond this, objects can also affect who your Sim is: purchase an easel and your Sim will start painting, improving their creativity and opening up new life paths, primarily in terms of employment advancement. As Will Wright explains, The gist of this "behavioral architecture" is that the intelligence is a function not only of the people in the houses, but also of the environment you've provided for them.

That's right, you'll have to get a job. The game will include 10 career tracks, each with 10 jobs that will take budding actors from a meager waiter job to superstardom, or guide enlisted army personnel to a highprofile life as an astronaut.

LIFE OF THE PARTY

The living part of the game is probably the most unportant - it's undoubtedly the most fascinating. especially when it comes to Sims interacting with their neighbors. Other people will eventually drop by, and it's your job to forge relationships with them all. Ideally, you'd like warm relationships, since you'll need to make friends and influence people in order to reach the higher career tracks - not to mention start a family It would be easier if you could control the neighbors, but even though they're from families you've created in other parts of the neighborhood, you can't control them once they leave their own home.

While parties, hot tub get-togethers, and conversations about aliens and other common interests will help

you get and keep your friends, you'll really have to work to get a spouse. You'll have to woo someone with backrubs, compliments, hugs, and kisses before you pop the question Just as in life, one miscue could foul the whole deal up. Once you do wed, you'll then gain direct control of your new partner and can start a family, growing to a maximum of eight - perfect for a very Brady Christmas.





FAMILY ALBUM

Early playtesters are responsible for the creation of one of THE SIMS' coolest features - a built-in screen capture utility that lets you string together and annotate a series of shots. What Maxis discovered when people played the game was that they instinctively constructed stories around the squabbles, job promotions, and untimely deaths of their pet people. These photo albums can be saved in a very tidy web page format and posted online, allowing people to share the stories of their virtual families.

Even better, the families in your neighborhoods are saved in a web page format as well. This means that the SIMS' community can go beyond the scrapbooks to actual hands-on experimentation with the populace of other players' communities by downloading the families directly into their games, and letting them interact with the families already there.

In an odd way, THE SIMS shares the same enormous potential for self-expression that BLACK & WHITE does, allowing players to play the game the way they want, with results that can't be tidily predicted, Maxis is embracing the game's potential for delightful unpredictability, with no better example of this than the proposed Genetic Face Generator, This generator would be used to create the faces of Sim kids, blending the features of their parents to create a unique individual. When you consider that people can use their own faces and/or any 3D skin for their game characters, the possibilities are infinite. In fact, virtually every aspect of the game can be customized: skins, faces, objects, surface tiles, careers - you name it. While Maxis will release new items and careers after the game ships, we expect the user-created material to be the most inventive

THE SIMS is pretty much a simple stroke of genius, the sort of idea that makes you slap yourself on the forehead and ask, "Why didn't anyone think of this before?" What's not to love about toying with the infinite possibili-

ties inherent in the lives of people? With such an immadiately understandable premise, THE SIMS seems destined to have an even broader appeal and marketability than the rest of the SIM franchise GGU

Genre: Strategy Release Date: U1 2000 Publisher: Electronic Arts Developer: Maxis





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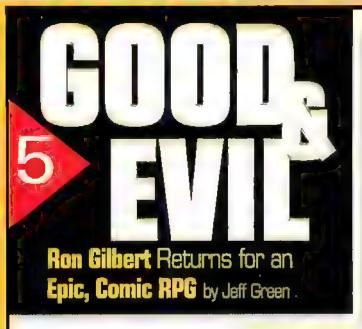
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A Blast from the Past-Rejoin bad-ass road warrior Taurus and friends on a drive for revenge in the highly anticipated sequel to one of the best pc games of all time—Interstate 76



Gome Week 1 1977



on Gilbert has a story to tell us. It is an epic story of heroes and villains, of good and evil. It is a story of a town in trouble, of a mighty warrior who comes to save the day.

If anyone else were telling this story, we know what would happen next. We've all heard it many times before. Too many times. But this is a story by Ron Gilbert, a man who has created some of the funniest and best-loved computer games ever. So what happens next, in his story, is this the warrior arrives in town, trips over a drainage ditch, impales himself on his own sword, and dies. Now they need a new hero.

This is about all we're going to spill of the plot of GOOD AND EVIL, Ron Gilbert's new RPG/adventure, because to

tell more would spoil things. All you really need to know is that one of gaming's best designers has something new up his sleeve, and if everything goes his way, it's going to change the way we think about role-playing games.

FATHER OF SCUMW Gilbert's goals are high habit of setting new set at LucasArts I masterpiece IslAND: ed the SCUM cofort component of the State of the Scumpan of the State of

Gilbert's goals are high, but fortunately for him, he has a career-long habit of setting new standards whenever he invents a game.

At LucasArts in the mid-'80s, he created hilanous comic masterpieces like MANIAC MANSION and MONKEY ISLAND 1 AND 2, and in the process essentially invent-

SCUMM engine) as well as the cut-scene. Later, as cofounder of Humongous Entertainment, Glibert completely redefined kids' games with the megapopular PUTT-PUTT, FREDDI FISH, and PAJAMA SAM franchises, which offer brilliantly scaled-down adventure games for young kids Most recently, Gilbert helped start up Humongous' Cavedog subdivision, whose first title was the wildly popular TOTAL ANNIHILATION.

Now Gilbert is again working on what his many fans have craved for years—a new comic story to savor. But it's not an adventure game, it's a role-playing game with a classic fantasy setting, with a plot and environments that will veer wildly as Gilbert unravels his involving story.

And it is his story, not yours. There is no pretending that you are the main character. "You're just not," says Gilbert. "He has a personality, and it's not your personality. But the choices you make are going to help shape him, and shape the expenence of the game."

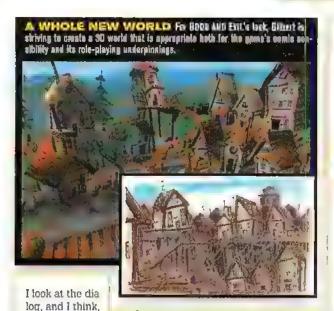
The focus on a specific character, with a distinct personality, is rooted in

sonality, is rooted in Gilbert's belief that story evolves from character and not the other way around "In a lot of the RPGs, it doesn't seem to matter which character I pick—they all say the same thing. I look at the character on screen, and I look at the dialog, and I think, 'why would this person ever say this?'

he expected from a game to Greent, Good AND EV t will

morculous characters,

populated by an assortment



person ever say this?' Characters just become 'the thief' or the archer' but don't have real personalities."

I'M FUNNY HOW?

'why would this

As you'd expect from the MONKEY ISLAND creator, GOOD AND EVIL is going to use lots of humor—much of it directed at role-playing conventions. Characters will talk amongst themselves about "leveling up," for example, while the plentiful dialog and indiculous characters, like an evil crow, will retain Gilbert's absurdist bent. But alongside the humor is going to be a senious role-playing game. As he put it, "If I just do a funny story but it's not a good RPG....I'm dead. So all the things you're used to seeing, they're there. They're all taken very seriously."

Largely inspired by LEGEND OF ZELDA. Gilbert is designing a large, fully-3D world to be played in third-person perspective; it will be open enough for gamers to explore on their own, in a non-linear fashion, while simultaneously keeping things story-based. Depending on the choices you make, and on how much you choose to explore, gamers will have different experiences while still receiving the same major plot points.

"To me, the perfect game is like you kind get through it and are done in a few hours but then you can go back and play it over and over and always pull something new out of it. To me, that's a lot more interesting than slogging through 150 hours of gameplay just to get to the end of a story. The ultimate goal is to tell a cohesive story while still

providing enough randomness and diversity to keep gamers coming back for more—unlike the finality of most adventures and RPGs "

The game will be combat-intensive, and you will die if you fail, unlike in Gilbert's previous games. It's going to be a relatively simple system, not dependent on the learning of fancy combo moves; it will be dependent largely on how well your character was equipped and skilled before going into battle.

THE END

GOOD AND EVIL is still a good year away, and a lot may change, including the title. But we confidently included it here because of Gilbert's incredible Midas touch, which makes anything he creates a mustplay experience. We'll let him have the last word

"Why did I make this game? There are things about adventure games that I really love, and I wanted to





put those things into another type of game. What I hope this will do is completely raise the bar as to what story and dialog have to be in a role-playing game. My big fantasy

dream is that once you've played an RPG with a great story and well-written dialog,

you'll never want to go back again," [331] Genra: RPG

Release Date: Q3 2000 Publisher: GT Interactive Developer: Cavedon



"To me, one of the most important things in the world is stories. Talkey a story will in a game is kied of a lost art. A for of times, Act I is in the manual, and then you get to the action. I'm saying, let's just do all time acts in the game itself. When you to to lonew anything - no more than you know when you wask into a movie for the first time."

GILBERT'S GAMEOGRAPHY

וימובויינוני בייווייוני גצוני בונימונים

בתלינ הנים, זב רך פריו העלי רפווהך ויווניוסטן

CHETEL AS WOUNTS A 12PMAN

Philist Firmin & Tarmera Beasure

PUTT PUTT JOINS THE PARADE (AND MANY OTHER HUMONBOUS ENTERTAINMENT TITLES) him with their own severed limbs before feasters on his guts. And that was right about the time we knew we couldn't wait to play Mocturne. This game will be oausing some helladious nightmare later this year.

- Computer Gaming World

"It is unforgettable, astonishing, and techniquith riveting visual realism. Yet behind the rich lighting and gossamer fog is a timeless sense of adventure. This is gaming at its best.

- Adrenaline Vault







It is 1959, and in the sandewed verit around you there exists an ungodly evil; verevolves, vanpires, should and flesh-eating sombles that wait just estaid the light's unlocked door to feed upon innocence. There also exist guardians of the good and just, tiveless viginates dapable of tracking down this evil and turning it upon itself. You are one of them, and you hunt, as your vile quarry fore, by night.

NCCTURNE

new geome of going to book

UNEFASHED HALLOWEEN 1999





This game contains strong scenes of animated violence, language and nuclii Sultable for mature audiences only.

History monoposities are wel They are like washes Where there is your walls in the shadown writing for darkness to open their door And Thise washes they are market function Nuclear belocaust in ages, drought function the Gookhouse will not wise then out.



Feel What It Is To Be Immortal.

A MARQUERADE RELECTIVITION

"Best of E3"

Adrenaline Vault, Game Spy,

"RPG of E3"

ES net

"RPG of Show"

iGN com, All Semes Networks
Voedoe Extreme



Live as a vampire, feeding on human prey white struggling to maintain your humanity;



Mulid your own thrilling spline advanture with a unique storytelling system.



Enter the World of Darkness* and encounter vampires of different, along, also other horrors.



Survive over 800 years from mediaval Prague to a medera gethic New York







ACTIVISION

www.activision.com

finispine The Management, White Well and World of Barbone's are registered in destructs and Apoples. The Management is a redount of White Well Publishing, Inc. & 1900 White White Publishing, Inc. & 1900 Ministry, Inc. & 1900 Activishing, Inc. & 1

BLASTS FROM THE PAST



GANES THAT NEED TO BE REMADE

AND THE PEOPLE WHO **DESERVE**TO MAKE THEM

By Chris Lombardi and the CGW Staff

ate to break it to you like this, but good games don't go to heaven when they die. Nope,

there's no eternal bliss for the greats of gaming's classic age, no angelic host of perfect and eternal players; there's just a sort of fading purgatory of fond memories in the minds of aging gamers.

It's a damn shame. Although most games from days gone by deserve their increasing obscurity, there are a bunch of gems in the rubbish pile that, with a bit of graphics polish and same tweaks to design, could shine in all their former glory.

Bring back the love, we say! Let the classics live again! We rummaged through our memories—the few that have survived the senile dementia—and came up with this list of ordies but goodies that we think deserve another chance. We've also picked some contemporary game designers and development houses who we think have the stuff to do right by these classics.

RAGING DESTRUCTION SEA

FLECTRONIC ARTS 1986

RACING DESTRUCTION
SET was one game in
a series of

Construction Sets released by Electronic Arts in their 80s heyday

We'd love to see the concept of do-it-your self games make a comeback. But we'd be happy with the racing game for starters.

In RACING CONSTRUCTION SET, you built a slot-car racing track from scratch. You designed the track; placed jumps, mines, and oil slicks; designed your cars; and even adjusted the physics of the world. Then you'd take your slot cars for a spin.

For the remake, we'd pick the hottest car game group on the planet, the Electronic Art group responsible for the latest NEED FOR SPEED. Our demands are simple: We want a detailed and easy-to use track editor with all the bells—jumps, loops, banks, and a bag of obstacles to sprinkle around. We want a car editor that lets us build a car from tires to trans We want to be able to screw with the physics. Then, we want to be able to hop into a car and make a wreck of it. And we want a movie editor. Tomorrow, That's all.



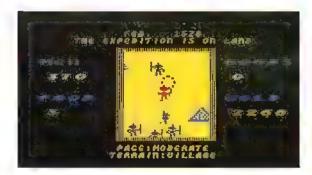
SEVEN CIMES OF GOLD

ELECTRONIC ARTS, 1983

SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD was the game that changed a few of us at CGW from boys to gamers. A tiny ship. A handful of terrified men. And an entire hemisphere to discover. It was a great setup and brilliantly executed for its time. As cheesy as the graphics were, and as

simplistic as the design was, SEVEN CITIES worked It made exploring a map fun. And it was brilliantly paced The long periods of peaceful exploration were punctuated by tense interactions with natives. This remake is a natural for Ensemble Studios, the ators of AGE OF EMPIRE. And they've got a ready-

creators of AGE OF EMPIRE.S And they've got a readymade name: Age of Exploration. Let us explore a huge, beautiful map on the same scale of the AOE games. Let us establish settlements in the RTS-base building style, but don't force us to micromanage the settlements; give us a good settlement-management AL. There needs to be some



competition, too: Rival nations with explorers and conquistadors racing to find the new natural wonders and resources randomly but realistically spread across the world But we don't want the game to turn into yet another RTS game. Exploration is the focus. Get it right, guys, or we'll hammer you mercilessly in the review.

PIRATESI

MICROPROSE, 1987

f anyone has approached perfection in a game design it was Sid Meier with PIRATES!.

Even with its dated graphics, the game still

holds up today. MicroProse made a half-assed

attempt at an update in the early 90s, but they only

marginally improved the graphics and didn't touch the gameplay. The game and gamers deserve a

visual revamping, and some of the weaker game ele-

ments could benefit from recent advances in RTS design. PIRATESI had it all—action, strategy, adventure game elements, real time wargaming, history. In the course of living through the career of a pirate on the Spanish Main, you fought ship-to-ship cannon battles, clashed swords with enemy captains, searched for treasure and the members of your scattered family, married the daughters of goverors, and managed the logistics of maintaining a



crew. You could even fight real-time land battles (though they weren't very good—the only flaw in an otherwise perfect design), and relive the historical careers of famous pirates.

For our remake dream-team we'd pick Blizzard as the main design group, since they're so good at real-time games and do a great job of creating rich universes around them. We'd bring in the PRINCE OF PERSIA team to develop the sword-fighting sequences. We'd have Ensemble's Bruce Shelley, gaming's Mr. Peabody, consult on the historical details and manual. And maybe we could find something for that Sid guy to do.

M.U.L.E.

ELECTRONIC ARTS, 1983

alk to any wheezing gaming geezer and he'll probably drone on and on about M.U.L.E., a brilliant little multiplayer game a decade ahead of its time. M.U.L.E. was essentially a family board game set on an undeveloped planet. Players bid on land parcels

developed those parcels to produce the game's resources, and then moved those resources around the game board using their M.U.L.E., a Multiple Use Labor Element. The design was tight and the opportunities to screw other players were plentiful.

New World Computing is the perfect choice for a remake. They've got boardganing roots and the right sense of humor. We'd skip the boxed version and single player game and go directly to Internet. And while they're in the right frame of mind, New World can bring back their hilarious multiplayer board game, NUCLEAR WAR.

PLANTALIANI

INFOCOM, 1984

f all the Infocom text adventures that could be revived, we choose PLANETFALL because it was one of the most popular. But we don't really care which ones gets remade—THE LURKING HORROR, TRINITY, MIND FOREVER

VOYAGING—all we care about is a good story, great writing, and mature themes.
All they had was text, so the Infocom authors did text very well. We miss their writing, boy, do we miss it

For our Infocom remake we'd team up the two current masters of storytelling, Tim Shaefer of LucasArts and Ron Gilbert of Cavedog We'll take the LucasArts artists, too. Throw them in the basement for a year and prepare to hear a tale,

Aren't you going to ride it? (After all, you built it.)



Environmental Audio"

Pick your theme

Build your park

Ride the rides



Salt the fries

Share your park online

Join the fun at www.simthemepark.com



CHAMPIONS AND INDESTRUCTIBLES

HAMPIONS and THE INDESTRUCTIBLES aren't games that need to be remade – they need to be finished. We want, no, need a super-hero game, and we need it now! The concept is a no-brainer, a natural, but no one has ever been able to pull it off.

We're going to give Peter Molyneax another shot at the INDESTRUCTIBLES, But this time, Pater, dump the first-person action game idea. Rather,

think SYNDICATE and isometric perspective. We want a nice character creation and development system that will let us pick and choose super-hero traits and personalities. We want a butt-load of cool animations of super-hero powers and environmental effects. We want to play multiplayer over the Net. We want to prance around in pretty underwear, shouting "Zoiks and away!" Is that so wrong?

MARBLE MADNESS

AIAR. 1984
million arcade
games could be
remade, but we
choose MARBLE MADNESS
because it was so original,
and the concept could easily
be expanded. The basic idea
for you youngsters: You
played a marble who rolled
around a weird 3D world full

of traps and puzzles and

"bad" marbles that would

bump you off the world and

into oblivion. It was different



It was challenging, it was fun.

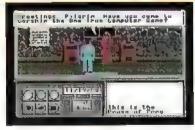
We give the redesign task to the master of arcade weirdness and funness. Singeru Miyamoto, designer of DONKEY KONG, MARIO BROS, ZELDA and other classics. We can't wait to see the bizarre maps, characters, and traps with which he'd litter the little marble's world. And he'd probably figure out a way to turn a lifeless sphere into a character worthy of lunch boxes and a cartoon series. We'd also commission a special rolling-ball controller from CH Products to completely recreate the feel of the original.

NEUROMANGER

INTERPLAY, 1988

nterplay did a great job with William Gibson's novel in their game adaptation. They captured many of the semmal

scenes, designed clever puzzles, and did a decent job with



the difficult task of making battles with computer AIs interesting But the Apple II just couldn't deliver the gritty visuals suggested by the novel, and the adaptation of Gibson's dialogue for the game left something to be desired. The game was just far too cartoony. For the remake, we give the job to DreamForge, in particular, to the

team that put together the award winning SANITARIUM. They've proven that they can do dark and moody, and they have a rare gift among game developers—an ear for dialogue and compelling narrative. Go at it guys. We want to be welking the streets of Chiba by summertime



ARCHON

ELECTRONIC ARTS, 1983

hess and the arcade game. Who'd a thunk. ARCHON blended this unlikely pair into a brilliant hybrid of action and strategy. The strategic portion was a very slight variant

strategic portion was a very slight variant on chess: two rows of characters faced-off on an alternating black and white grid. But when the characters met on a square, they dropped into an arcade battle.

For the remake, we'd keep the strategic game the same—spruced up graphically, BATTLECHESS-style. But for the character-on-character battles, we'd use the latest QUAKE engine to create the 3D battle-fields. The kicker is the online play. We'd love to see a setup whereby people could play different roles. You'd have your strategings playing the chess game, while twitch gamers fought gladiator due's in a first-person action mode.

As for design, we're going to keep this one for ourselves. We're currently working on the technology to transfer our cocktail napkin "design docs" into digital form And we've still to convince Thierry

'Scooter" Nguyen to change his major from English to computer science. But these are minor issues. With Jeff Green as project director, we're confident we'll have this one online for Christmas '23.



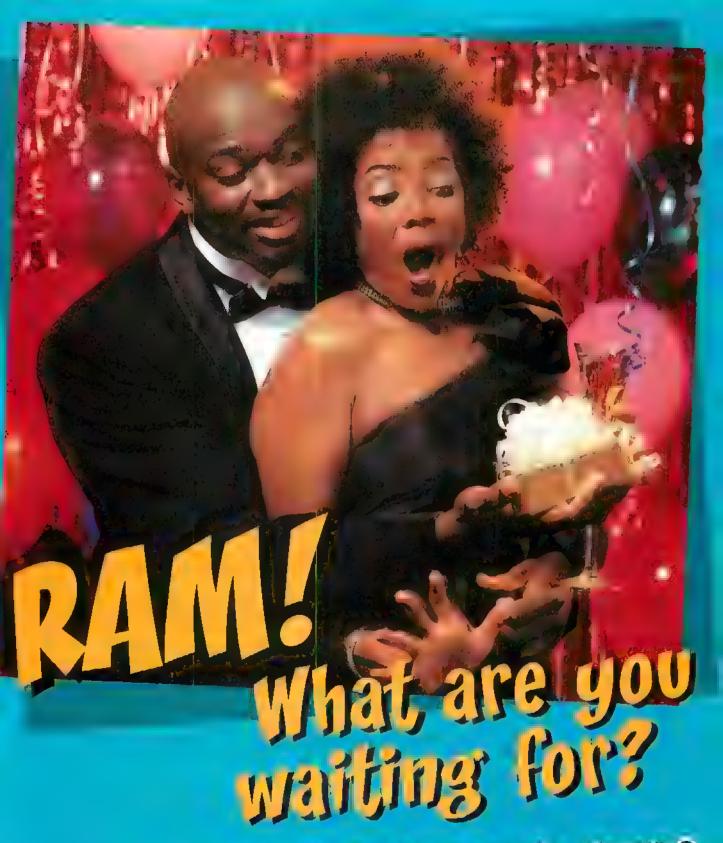


MAGIC CARPET

BULLTROG, 1994

the sensation of flight on a magic carpet was so good it could, literally, make you puke. And the visual effects of the spells, like the Earthquake spell that could up a continent in two before your eyes were stupefying. MAGIC CARPET deserves another flight through the gaming world with the benefits of 3D acceleration.

There are a lot of groups that could take this project on. But having just seen the 3D engine of HALO, we think Bungie deserves the draw. The HALO engine is capable of everything the MAGIC CARPET engine pulled off and a whole lot more. So finish up HALO real-quick like, guys, and take us on another MAGIC CARPET ride.



Do you have enough RAM to really dazzle?

WWW.RAMMEGGERS.COM

"We loved no Delt Dimposion PCs That a 266MHz Pentium I with 96MB of RAM was sent at its performable to a 550MHz Pentrum II with 32MB of BAM 1

ZDTag, the ZD Testing and Analy is 6 out

"...resistance is futile."

- PG Accelerator



"A virtually flawless masterpiece"

- Future Gamer
- "... will shake up the gaming landscape"
- CNET
- " a next-generation game in every sense..."
- The Adrenaline Vault
- "The 3D shooter for the next millennium."
- gamesmania.com
- "...I have to tell you, it's pretty damn cool"
- IGN.com



TOURNAMENT









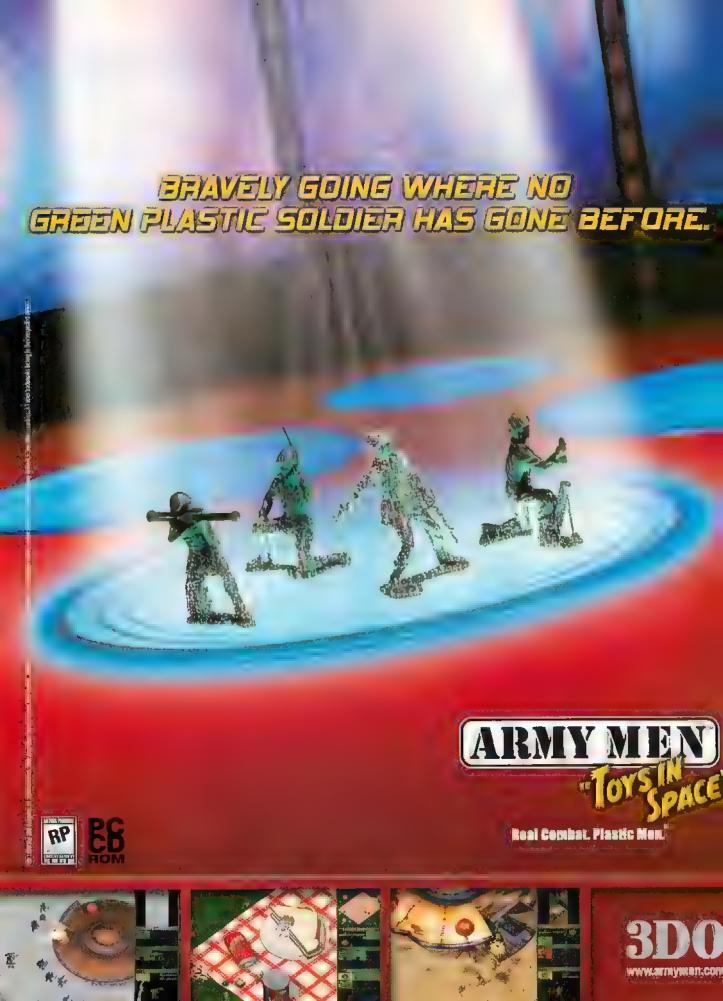












REVIEWS

NOVEMBER REVIEWS

CGW EDITORS' CHOICE GAMES IN RED

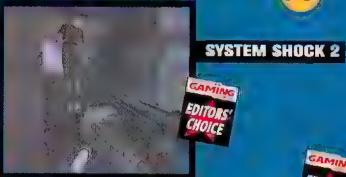
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HINING	PAGE
2.5	178
4	136
1.5	176
3	178
4	162
4,5	- 140
4	176
4.5	158
4	175
4	148
3	144
44	444
4,2	158
	1.5 3 4 4.5 4 4.5 4 4 3

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The cars' engines sound authentic - which means they all sound pretty much like power screw drivers - except "Aquacar," which sounds like an electric bong....

Mark Clarkson reviewing Re*Vol





JAGGED ALLIANCE 2



TOUSING WARNING WARNIN

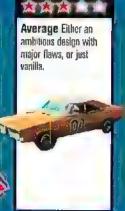
HOW DO WE RATE?

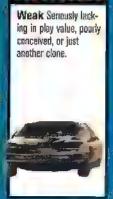
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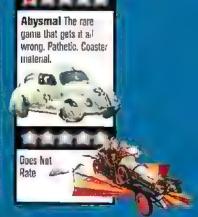
We Review Only Finished Cames—No Betas, He Patches.

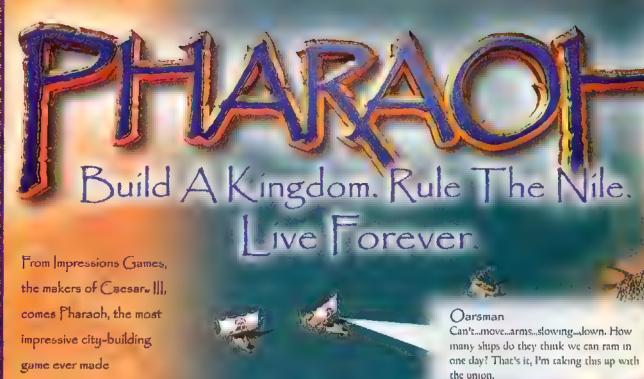












Immerse yourself in the grandeur of ancient Egypt, the mysterious kingdom beside the river Nile. Build a civilization for the centuries as you pass along your legacy from generation to generation, creating an empire and a bloodline built only for a Pharach.



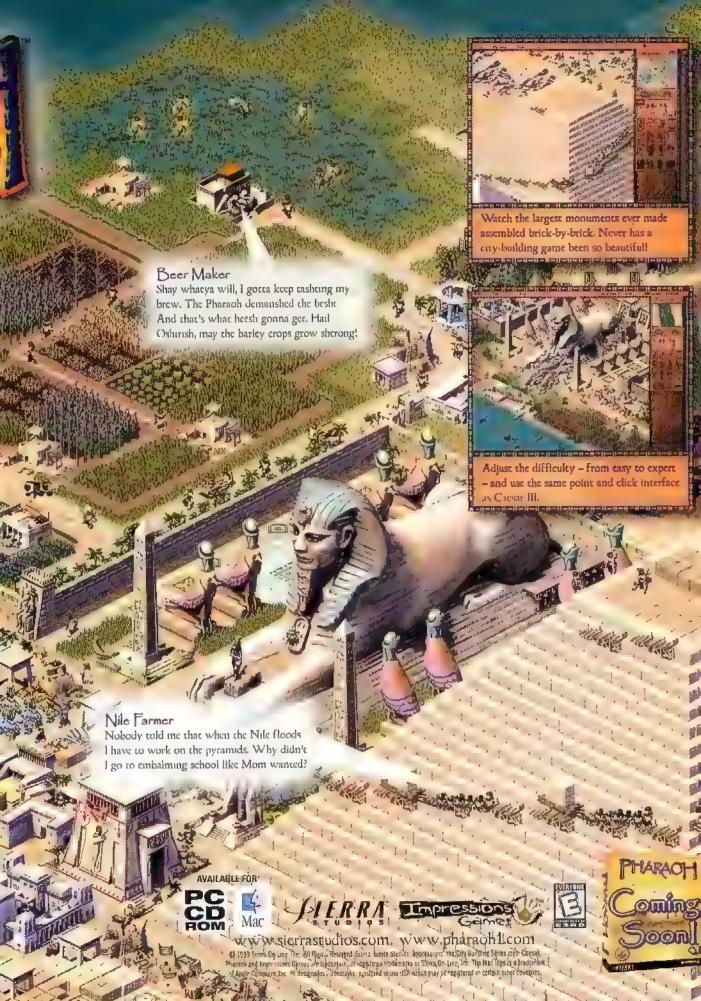
the union.

Pricat

Stop! Thicf! My God Ma'at gives me the power to strike you down where you stand! Feel lucky punk!

Thief

The Pharaoh's palace is filled with look They'll never notice if a little is missing! I might anger the Gods, but you won't catch me rowing in a galley all day. Next stop, the Beer Maker's, Stealing is thirsty work.



If You Want,
You Can Be Buried
With Your Hairless Cat.

Irrational Games Make Big Noise With Sequel to Quiet Classic

Successful Shock



ontrary to popular gaming lore, the original SYSTEM SHOCK sold over 170,000 copies and was not a commercial failure. But it is true that when initially released in 1994, Looking Glass's ground-breaking game was overlooked by a lot of gamers, although greeted with favorable reviews. Some gamers erroneously dismissed it as a DOOM clone, even though it was actually the offspring of a line of games that preceded any of id Software's first-person shooters.

SYSTEM SHOCK defied pigeon-hole classification because it bor-

System Shock objekty staken útsko álháni rowed elements from a variety of genres. Yet it is precisely because of its creative design that it is now commonly, belatedly, regarded as one of the better games ever made.

Irrational Games was given the task of creating a worthy successor to the cult classic original, but the good news is that they responded by delivering a game that both retains the best attributes of SYSTEM SHOCK while providing a fresh gaming experience.

Back to the Future

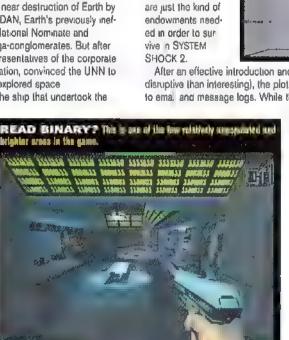
Even though it's a sequel, SYSTEM SHOCK 2 feets extremely original due to its science-fiction setting - rare for an RPG. The game's world offers a rich combination of paionic powers, contemporary and futuristic weaponry, and cyberpunkish implants and technical skills.

Here's the backstory: Prompted by the near destruction of Earth by the malevolent artificial intelligence, SHODAN, Earth's previously ineffectual governments formed the Unified National Nominate and imposed constraints on the power of mega-conglomerates. But after inventing faster-than-light technology, representatives of the corporate creator of SHODAN, TriOptimum Corporation, convinced the UNN to engage in a cooperative expedition to unexplored space

Your character awakens in a crisis, as the ship that undertook the

journey has apparently become intested by some form of alien life Suffering from everyone's favorite plot device, amnesia, your character





HANGING AROUND that minimp in the ligeright miner will capably lend you to ghoulish sites like this one. AND HANGING OUT Most corpses are worth searching for useable stuff, has received illegal cybernetic implants that grant superhuman abilities, and are just the kind of

After an effective introduction and a few early cut-scenes (more disruptive than interesting), the plot is conveyed primarily by listening to emal and message logs. While the convenient placement of

dozens of logs throughout the otherwise realistic environments is a bit contrived, the messages are engaging and gradually expand upon the lates of the storyline's key figures.

Unfortunately, since the settings have been abandoned by friendlies, the logs replace more significant interaction with nonplayer characters. There are also a handful of scripted scenes crafted using the game engine, and frequent and interesting ghostly re-enactments of recent events. Collectively, these methods convey intrigue and generate an eene atmosphere that make SYSTEM SHOCK 2 feet unique

SYSTEM SHOCK 2 isn't easily characterized. The role-playing

Requirements: Perlinim 200MHz, 200MB Iraa haid diiru spaca. 32MB RAM, 4MB Direct 30 video card. <mark>Recommended Requirements: Perlinim 300MHz, 64MB</mark> RAM, 500MB hard dive space, 3D Support: Direct 3D, and most major 3D cards. Multiplayer Support: Mose

Publisher: Leeking Glass/Electronic Arts • Bevalager: Irrational Rames • \$48 • www.shack2.cam ESRB Rating: Mature: animated violence, blood, and gare.

game elements are deeper than in the first game, as you're able to personalize your character's initial attributes and abilities and subsequently update them. The game looks and generally feels like a first-person shooter, but the RPG elements and detailed environments give gameplay more depth. Unlike a shooter, you'll find it hard to be successful in SYSTEM SHOCK 2 if you storm into every room, guns blazing. For good portions of the game the ammunition is scarce, forcing players to warlly advance through dark halways and lean around corners to look for resources and opportunities to dispatch foes.

Even solitary enemies can be dangerous opponents, especially early in the game, and travel through the genuinely creepy surroundings often slows to a crawl as a result of the need for caution. Carelessly trekking into an unscouted room can alert a security camera and result in your character's quick death, courtesy of a legion of enemies or a well-positioned laser turret. Hackers beware.

Sly Engine

SYSTEM SHOCK 2's engine is well equipped for such stealthy maneuvering, consisting essentially of an enhanced version of Looking Glass's Dark Engine, created for THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT, combined with some of the better interface features and controls of the original SYSTEM SHOCK. The engine's 3D-accelerated graphics are capable of producing plausible, futuristic environments, and its fogging and lighting effects look particularly good. The engine seems less capable of depicting characters, as humanoid figures look crafted from a fusion of rudimentary polygonal shapes, masked by a decent texture map.

Since there's plot justifications for irregularly-shaped beings, and since most of the game's settings are extremely dark, the relatively simplistic character models work fine, even if they're not as detalled as action gamers now expect. The music is appropriately atmospheric but the game's crisp sound effects deserve particular praise

Environmental audio is a supported feature that's used to great effect. Straining in the darkness to detect the distant wairing noise of a security camera, the haunting drone of a hybrid, or the misleading banter of a protocol droid becomes an essential tactic. It's great stuff, and contributes significantly to the tense overall mood.

One of the best aspects of TH/EF's engine was that it tracked how noisy and how visible (based upon surrounding lighting) your character was, and ensured that enemy Al responded accordingly. Those details have been ported intact to SYSTEM SHOCK 2. Stomping haphazardly through a well-lit area while blasting a shotgun will attract considerably more attention than in an action shooter — or in downtown L.A., for that matter.

Don't expect to be able to open the door to one room, deal with its inhabitants, and then caimly open the next door to do likewise. If any creatures are within earshot of combat, they'll try to join the fun, making it important to choose your fights carefully. The enemy At is very





good, as even basic grunts charge after you instead of haplessly lumbering in pursuit, while certain deadly opponents will try to stick to shadows, where they'll launch barely visible rapid-fire attacks.

SYSTEM SHOCK 2's interface is very well designed, with a simple click of the mouse allowing you to switch between the game's two modes — Shoot mode, used for moving and engaging enamies; and Use mode, which freezes your view as in an adventure game, where you can explore the environment, use inventory items, and access your PDA. To help you navigate, you can superimpose semi-transparent compass directions over your viewing window, pull up an automap, or maintain a miniature version of it enscreen. Since your character is supposed to be grafted with a variety of cybernetic implants, there's a reasonable explanation for your character's ability to pull up HUD information, such as the digital compass or an



assessment of an enemy's hit points. Thus, the interface actually contributes to the gaming world's ambience, instead of detracting from it.

Character Difficulties

Your character is initially trained in one of three branches of the UNN, acquiring the skills and attributes of either an officer of the OSA (emphasizing palonic powers), marines (weapon skills), or the navy (a combination of weapon skills, hacking, and other technical abilities). The professions don't add as much depth as you might otherwise suspect, since during the course of the game you can develop any skills or attributes regardless of your initial profession.

The professions are very unbalanced, especially at the beginning of the game when the cybermodules used to upgrade your character are extremely rare. It's almost impossible to survive without picking up at least a smattering of weapon and technical skills, and since navy characters start the game with those abilities, they have a huge advantage. Marines are essentially navy characters that have been stripped of technical skills. OSI characters are Luddites that lack both weapons and technical skills and are initially extremely frague; there are very few items that allow them to repfenish their psionic powers.

I suspect almost all players will develop characters with a mix of PSI, technical, and weapons skills, so that instead of adding meaningful depth, your initial character election is essentially just a hidden additional difficulty setting. During the course of the game you can develop truly different characters who are capable of successfully completing the game, but the initial selection between professions isn't relevant in the manner it was intended.

Lastly, even though the game features a novel setting and contains significant RPG elements, gameplay doesn't evolve significant by beyond that of recent first-person shooters. You'll spend much of your time firing at enemies around corners, opening crates, and engaging in key bunts that demand meticulous exploration.

But the realistic environments, intriguing plot, and creepy atmos-



phere make SYSTEM SHOCK 2 compelling throughout. A patch is planned to add a cooperative multiplayer mode to give the game additional longevity. Like the original classic, this is a hybrid game that effectively blands a variety of genres into a thoroughly enjoyable, accessible package.

www.ttig.com
Well-designed Looking Glass fan sita
www.shack2.com
The official sita

DRAKAN is a Genre Crossing Blockbuster

Flight and Magic

here's a fine line between tribute and rip-off in any artistic endeavor. That thin median fades to non-existence in the gaming world, where tomorrow always looks a heckuva lot like yesterday. Is that ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON or THEME PARK? BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION or MASTER OF ORION? HALF-LIFE or - hey, wait a second...

The latest entrant to blur the lines is the Psygnosispublished, Surreal Software-developed DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME. Equal parts TOMB RAIDER, MAGIC CARPET, and traditional adventure, this game has one confusing family tree. So does it rip off the

classics or pay homage to them? Hell, I don't know. I'll have to let the great minds of our generation ponder that one. All a Coors-guzzling deadbeat like me can say is that DRAKAN is

a whole lotta fun to play. It's a truly inspired example of garning artistry that makes both the publisher and developer two companies to watch in the future.

DRAKAN is the story of a girl and her dragon. Rynn is an athletic young lady (which in the gaming universe means that she possesses both spectacular breasts and an aerobicized behind) who becomes bound to the legendary dragon Arokh as both friend and rider, while attempting to rescue her brother Delon, As a Dragon Rider, her mission becomes even more perilous. Rynn and Arokh soon find themselves fighting to save both her brother and the very world of DRAKAN from the forces of darkness. Hey, what were you expecting? Poetry?

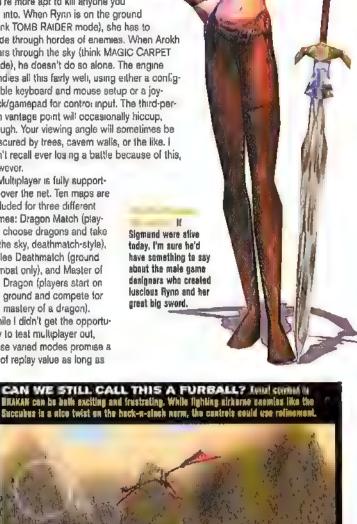
Despite the routine storyline, DRAKAN captured my imagination from the moment I started playing. Much of this was due to the simple yet elegant design. The game unfolds like an adventure, with initial goals

> ers. You might begin one of searching for a specific with a character who will give you another quest Some quests are routine "give me this and I'll give you that" tasks, while oth-These missions will lead through diverse worlds with landscapes that encompass everything from a voicanic hell to ver-

soon branching off into oththe 11 campaign maps by location, but then meet up ers advance the main plot. dant forests.

Everything about the game is combat-intensive. While you will converse with the odd person, you're more apt to kill anyone you run into. When Rynn is on the ground (think TOMB RAIDER mode), she has to wade through hordes of enemies. When Arokh soars through the sky (think MAGIC CARPET mode), he doesn't do so alone. The engine handles all this fairly well, using either a configurable keyboard and mouse setup or a joystick/gamepad for control input. The third-person vantage point will occasionally hiccup, though. Your viewing angle will sometimes be obscured by trees, cavem walls, or the like. I can't recall ever losing a battle because of this,

Multiplayer is fully supported over the net. Ten maos are included for three different games: Dragon Match (players choose dragons and take to the sky, deathmatch-style), Melee Deathmatch (ground combat only), and Master of the Dragon (players start on the ground and compete for the mastery of a dragon). While I didn't get the opportunity to test multiplayer out, these varied modes promise a lot of replay value as long as







Regerrements: Pedium 189MHz, 32MB RAM, 30 accelembr video card, 400 MB hard drive space Recommended Requirements: Pedium & 233MHz 3D Support: Direct36. Michiglayer Support: Up to cight players via Interest or LAN.

Publisher: Psygnesis • Developer: Surreal Seltware • \$48 • www.psygnesis.com ESRO Rating: Majure; animated blood, gore, violence

the obvious technical issues have been addressed.

All the standard adventure/role-playing conventions make an appearance in solo play. Magic potions will restore your health, make you invisible, and so on, Special crystals also add to your destructive arsenal. More than 50 weapons are included for Rynn, from rusty axes to magical swords. She will also find various suits of armor during the course of her travels. Arokh starts out with the expected fiery breath, but soon finds different runes that allow him to increase his power By the time you're

through, Arokh wil, have balched gas, aghtning, ice, and lava.

DRAKAN features a good range of villains upon which to test your murderous prowess. The tro.I-like Wartoks can both slash and head-butt you into submission. Orcs are irritating little guys with a tendency to duck your best blows. Giant spiders and the Lovecraftian Scavengers both kill and creep you out.

"downsizing."

More challenging enemies such as the demonic Succebus and evil dragons turn up later in the game. Unfortunately, many are by turns cunning foes and mouth-breathing morons, I've had

> some flee in the midst of a beating and others simply stop on the verge of beating me into a bloody pulp.

STAFF CUTS, MEDIEVAL STYLE Rymn comes to the rescue of this poor victim of ele-fashinged

My lone major annoyance with gameplay is aerial combat. For a legendary dragon who tought many a battle in his day, Arokh lumbers about with all the agility of a hedgehog in a hang glider. Any serious opposition in the skies always takes me out a good seven or eight times before I get in a few lucky shots. This can be a serious drag in some stages of the game, and I doubt that I would enjoy dragon vs. dragon multiplayer for this reason,

The Surreal 3D engine does yeoman work with the visuals. Each environment is lovingly depicted and fully immersive. Weather and fog effects,

BURNIN' FOR YOU Hymr makes sure that this Wartak carries a terek for her. Secondary attack made with her nifty flame blade is as hosulful as it is deadly.



along with some fantastic colored lighting, complete the flusion.

Character animations are equally good. Rynn moves like the lithe warrior sha's supposed to be, and the Wartoks stomp around like they just emerged from under a fairytale bridge.

With the exception of the atrocious voice acting (Rynn sounds more like a mall rat than a noble Dragon Rider), the audio effects are similarly fantastic. Rushing water, the echo of every movement in a cavern, the clang of blade on blade — all is wholly bolievable. The musical score is similarly inap.ring; if John Philip Sousa scored a film version of Lord of the Rings, it would sound the this.

DRAKAN, ORDER OF THE FLAME is a must-play for anyone who experienced the TOMB RAIDER rush (and subsequent letdowns of the mediocre sequels) and lovad it. It renews third-person gaming with so many intriguing new twists, that even those burned out by TOMB RAIDER clones will still, find something to enjoy here.



CHAPAN THE TRAKEN STEET OF THE SAMESTY NETWORK

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THE ARMIES AND CAPITED INC.
THE ARMIES AND CAPITED INC.

AND PLACE IS CHICKED UP THE THAT I MIT A WILLIAM INTO

"IT LOOKS LIKE TURN-BASED STRUCEGY GAMING IS ABOUT TO GET A SHOT IN THE ARM. IT WILL HELP SOCIDIFY AND STRENGEHEN THE GENRE". IGNECCOM.

"INCREDIBLY DETAILED GRAPHICS

MAKE THIS THE MOST LIKELY CONFERENCE TO THE FAMILIANY TURN-BASED CROWN." PC ACCELERATOR



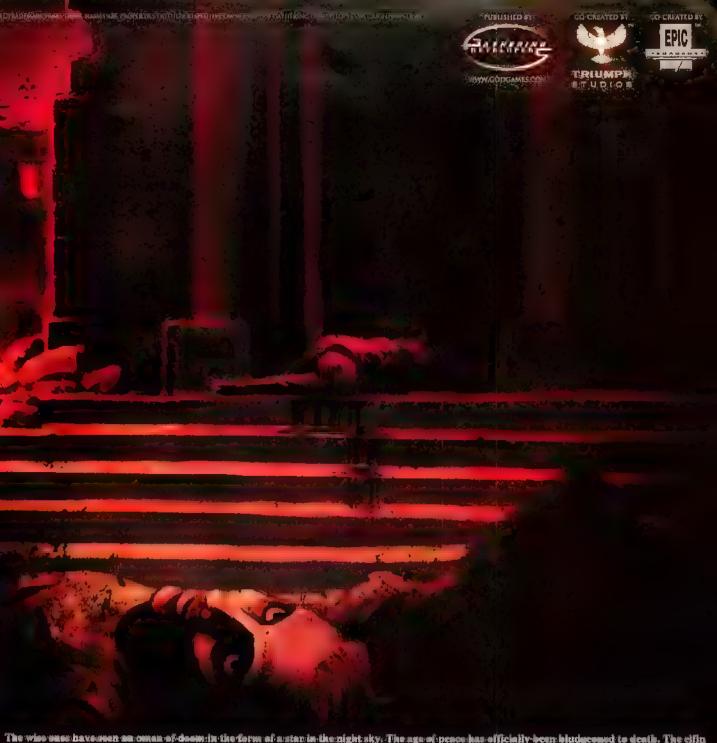
Chaice of automatic (fast cambut) are turnbased factical cominst. Conjuce over 160 spolls special over 7 aphacos of magis.



Attempt to large strategic allonaus with 12 different races, including humans, sives, frontings, over, dwarves and the undenti-



Over 100 different fighting units and more than 50 unique heroes that grow in experience and powers



The wise onse have seen an oman of dosm in the form of a stan in the night sky. The age of peace has officially been bludgeoned to death. The cifin court lies in ruin, and two factions have emerged. Buttle flags have been raised, and silence has anveloped the land. This is the caim before the storm. You cannot choose to avoid the apocalyptic buttle that locan on the horizon, distract and the need for reyonge have a very long shelf life.



Make critical doctrions involving alagnmatic, heroes, captured towns, tough spells, immenties, and stooths: "



Rattin your way through must open manns, breach the outer wall in city signs and explore duck dangeres:



- Wir wage directed a piecete.

It's No Revolution, but Jagged Alliance 2 is a Tough Strategy Gem

iViva Arulco!



🌪 he is evil. A driven bitch. She is Deidranna Reitman. the self-proclaimed "queen for life" of Arulco, a small third-world nation now suffering under its 10th year of ruthless oppression. She has killed her father-in-law, framed her husband for the crime, beaten down her own citizens, and is now bleeding the country's resources dry. Your mission, in Sir-Tech's long-awaited, finally-released JAGGED ALLIANCE 2, is to take this evil bitch down.

And as you here your mercenaries, assemble your squads.

and attack the land sector by bloody sector, you will experience the satisfaction that comes from knowing that you are

AGGED ALLIANCE 2 EVIEWEDUBY: JETT GERER not only doing the right thing for Freedom and Justice, but you're also knee-deep in one of

the toughest, most entertaining, and flat-out best strategy games of

It's not easy - and that may turn off more casual gamers - but then, who ever said that taking down military dictatorship was easy?

Party for Your Right to Fight

Like Sir-Tech's original game of a few years back, JA2 takes a standard strategy-game framework and livens it up with some role-playing

elements. The game begins, actually, in standard RPG fashion: You create a custom character, with ten standard RPG stats (though I can't honestly say I looked at many of them beyond Marksmanship). After creating your own character, you go on an online shopping spree to hire your first group of mercenaries.

All of the hiring, equipment-buying, and much of the information you receive in the game is handled through a clever interface

that emulates the aptop computer

you're supposedly packing next to your assault rifle and canteen. To hire

> mercenaries, you log onto the Web and go to a merc-hiring Web site. To order weapons and ammo, you link to an online depot. Throughout the game, you'll receive messages and files over email, while a history file constantly updates your current missions and quests. It's a great idea that Sir-Tech executes perfectly, complete with a "You've got mail" alert and cheesy banner ads on the Web pages.

MURDER.COM All of your mercenary biring takes place over the Web, which we all knew can be a reurge of great evil. ō.s. 73 mar

HARD FOUGHT JAZ's tectical bettles - complete with varying stances, ubstacles, a battery of weapane, and more - con be long, slow, difficult affairs. You'll unen svory suctor you take.

> Gameplay from here on out is divided mainly between two screens. On the Map screen, you take care of all the strategic macro-management. Here, you'll organize mercs into squads, arrange specialized assignments (such as healing other mercs and training local militias), negotiating merc contracts, and monitoring your finances as well as your squads progression through the game's 200+ sectors.

> Keeping a constant eye on all of this - and there is a lot - is key to your success in JAGGED ALUANCE 2. Spend your money too fast or

> > too loosely, and you'll find yourself with no resources for needed equipment or fresh, experienced mercs when you need them. Fail to rest or heal your mercs properly, or neclect to train the local militias, and Deidranna's forces will eat you for lunch. You must perform a tricky balancing act of moving forward as quickly as possible. white being efficient and patient enough to keep your squads healthy, wellequipped, and well-positioned. It is impossible to win this game by just blundering forward without a plan.

Bring the Noise

The other half of the game takes place on the Tactical screen, where sectors are rendered in sometric, 2D fashion ala

FALLOUT or BALDUR'S GATE. The artwork is not stunning, but it gets. the job done, with enough variety in terrain, structures, and obstacles to keep things interesting. Those looking for flashy 3D eye candy, however, should look elsewhere.

When you enter a sector occupied by the enemy, a pop-up screen allows you to retreat, have the computer auto-resolve the combat, or enter the sector yourself to play out the combat. Your squad moves through the sector in real time until you encounter the enemy, when the game switches into turn-based mode.

For each turn, each merc has a certain number of points that can

nterface; encueir addictive strategy Way he too slowpaced for suma;

battles can be

intramely luri

mil tedious.

South Complex

jemeplay; tough

computer synts

nta; clavar

Requirements: Pentium +33MHz, 32MB RAM, 373MB hard drive space. Recommanded Requirements: Pentium 165MHz, 64MB RAM, 854 hard drive space. 3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support: Hans.

Publisher: TelonSeft • Designer: Sir-Tech Canada • \$50 • www.sir-tech.com

It's Not Just The Technology Breaking New Ground, It's The Footsteps Of A 10-Ton T-Rext





WIZARD Weeks Wiczardwerfus confi







be used to move, change position (prone, sitting, or standing), fire a weapon, use items, or reload weapons. Position really makes a difference, as does weapon range. Each turn presents you with numerous options, and requires careful planning — especially since, early in the game, the enemy almost invariably has better, longer-range weapons than you.

As you progress, your weaponry and skills get better, but the fighting, if anything, gets harder, with more enemies per sector with even more brutal weaponry. Battles, in general, can be slow, demanding affairs – I'd often spend hours trying to beat a single sector on the game's lowest difficulty level – and as such might wear on some gamers' patience, especially those craving instant gratification.

About the Al, well, I've played worse. During some battles, you'll swear it's cheating, as it seems to miraculously score a hit every turn,

no matter the obstacle while you miss constantly. At other times it's absolutely brain dead, sending troops practically running into your arms in plain sight. Overall, however, it feels right. Deliberate, strategic thinking is usually rewarded, while barreling forward with guns blazing will earn you a trip to the Load Game screen every time.

DUELIN' BANIOS The grant's trans NVIII. Soft as this formy of hillings east of Cambria, previde a canstant source of calertaining dialog. DOOFUS FOR HIRE Creating your own custom merc allows you to put yourself in the pame. The squad would be mattern without the factor of the squad would be mattern without the factor of the squad would be mattern without the factor of the squad would be mattern without the factor of the squad would be mattern without the factor of the squad would be mattern.

Counter Thore a Domb

JA2's trump card is the mercenaries Themselves. There are dozens of them to choose from in the game, each with his or her own distinct personality. Each has a huge number of sound bites sprinkled berally throughout the game, and while some can get awfully repetitive, others are h langus, and succeed greatly in providing the game with a constant source of comic relief in what might otherwise be a rather dour experience.

It's not just ear candy, either, but is tied directly into gameplay. Mercs will tell you when they're tired, or when their contracts are up. Some refuse to work with one another. Once they've attained a certain

level of experience, they'll even up their fees on you. As in an RPG, I found myself getting oddly attached to them (even, or maybe especially, the moronic Steroid), and ended up reloading the game whenever one of them would die.

While the game only has one long single-player campaign and no multiplayer, much of the reptay value comes from trying different mercs, or combinations of mercs. I played two games at once – one at home and one at work – and they were completely different experiences. The game's structure is totally non-linear (though you are warned which sectors to avoid early in the game), so there is encless opportunity to devise new strategies to try to whittle your winning time down. Random side quests will also keep you busy, as will experimenting with the game's many found objects, which, though undocumented, will often combine into useful new weapons and tools.



Finally, about the tack of multiplayer: thank goodness. I loved this game, but I can't imagine anything more boring than playing it, turn by turn, with a friend, JAGGED ALLIANCE 2's joy comes from your interaction with the mercs. Other humans aren't needed here.

Countdown to Armageddon

Ultimately, JAGGED ALLIANCE 2 is probably too tough and too slow-paced for the casual gamer, and the somewhat crude graphics may leave newer gamers wondering what the fuss is all about. But hardcore gamers looking for a serious chailenge may not find a more satisfying, entertaining, turn based strategy game this year.

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Retawey through real pedestrians, traffic signals, traffic, and copsi



No tracks. Just 4 spraymer prison downtowns from NY to San Fran.



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Acclaim Almost Delivers Comic Book Justice

Big Bad Voodoo Daddy

the comic book license seems almost inherently doomed. Discounting the Marvel characters in Capcom fighting games, can you think of any good comic book games? The last comicbook based game I had any fun with was SPIDERMAN for the Atari 2600. So imagine my surprise, and sigh of relief, when I found that Acclaim went and made a pretty good game out of a comic book. SHADOWMAN. It's not a great one, but leagues ahead of the trash from other licenses

For those familiar with the comic series, the game takes place around the first story arc of the series' relaunch. For everyone else: You play Mike LeRoi, who is essentially a combination hitman/shaman when he becomes Shadowman, The backstory is that Legion (from Mark 5:9) has recruited five serial killers and plans to

bring about the Apocalypse. What Shadowman must do is travel into Deadside (the place where the dead rest), and acquire the Dark Souls before Legion and his Five do. Once Shadowman has acquired all the Dark Souls, he can defeat Legion.

Just Me and My Shadowman

At its heart, SHADOWMAN is another third-person perspective action game, but with a lot more action than the TOMB RAIDER series. Shadowman isn't here to explore; he's here to violently exor-



cise some souls. Inbetween the gun/voodoo shootcuts, you have a wee bit of puzzle solving, mainly finding special keys or deactivating gigantic machines.

Beautiful graphics angino; gazel-look ing Boudside log: els; nonlinear design. Repetitive; net enough puzzle elements; ineffective mouse-control; incomplete save game systemal

Graphically, the game is beautiful and is probably the stickest looking third-person. title out there right now. The levels look great, especially Deadside, which alternates between the surreal imagery of a Bosch painting and the harsh, grilly darkness of David Fincher's Seven. Also, the levels are nonlinear; while there is an overall set path, you go through the game and open up different areas at different times, and you can travel between them at any time. If you're stuck in one place, you can go back to a location unlocked earlier to see if there is more to explore.

The controls are more TOMB RAIDER than HERETIC II, slanted toward keyboard or gamepad control. While the mouse can be used, it's not nearly as well implemented as HERETIC II's mouse ook.

Stick a Pin in Me

While SHADOWMAN looks like a great start, some things bog it down. The enemy Al isn't stellar. Once I started using the strate keys, I literally ran circles around the enemy while firing. Also, the game can feel very repetitive. I have no trouble running and gunning incessantly in other games, but after a session of doing so in SHADOWMAN, I feet like moving on to something else. There didn't seem



LIVE AND LET LIVE (inside doesn't lack as great as fleabilds, no you pan see on this exterior level without Applelm's usual heavy fag.



to be enough puzzle elements to balance out the relentless action.

The save-game system has a bad case of console-itis. Yes, you can save and load at any time, but why is there a quick-save command but no complementary quick-load? If the quick-load was going to be omitted, then the game should at least automatically restore from your last save, not from the beginning of the level.

SHADOWMAN is a good start, both for Acclaim and for the industry. It shows that a decent game can be made from a comic license. For third-person action fans who don't mind jumping and gunning a lot, it's a reasonable buy. Let's hope that Acclaim uses this as a springboard for some really good comic-book based projects, (Note to Acclaim: either do an X-O Manowar game, or have

Christopher Priess Write the next Shadowman anme. (747)

Parks to reduce a local participation of te specifically for SHASSWAAN the game: new, capalebookresources com predictive for contas in gonafal

Requirements: Pentum 200, 32M8 RAM, 4x CC-ROM, Directical compatible sound and video cents, 29M8 hard drive space, 30-accelerator cent. Recommended Requirements: Penten-H 300, 64M0 RAM, 620M8 and date space. 3D Support: Direct30. Maitoplayer Support: None.

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment - Developer: Anclaim Studies Teaside - \$48 - www.acclaim.cet

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Your Mama Proud.



Warhammer 40,000 Meets Panzer General II

Respect Your Eldars

ave you ever played a science-fiction computer game and come away with the feeling that the gaming universe was so cheesy and shallow, it must have been thrown together by a bunch of weary, caffeine-high programmers locked in a room until they could finally come up with something? Good news: RITES OF WAR avoids that problem, using as its setting the highly developed Warhammer 40,000 tabletop gaming system. Combining aspects of that universe with the PANZER GENERAL II gaming engine results in a thoroughly engrossing, turn-based strategy game.

Lictors and Gargoyles and Genestealers, Oh My!

In RITES OF WAR, you assume the role of the Eldars, a race human-like in appearance but far-advanced in capabilities. A victim of their own advanced mental abilities, they've destroyed their home world and travel in fiving spacecraft called Craftworlds. Your Craftworld stumbles upon a planet that was genetically designed

A great gaming:

arnet Pilezen

universe using the

SENERAL II emaine:

interacting care-

naign; versatile

scenaria aditor:

Only one campaign:

from one race's

mint of view

long ago - an Eldar utopia called Davinuus, Scouting parties have been met with unexpected attacks from human Imperial forces. Outnumbered and outgurned, you know an all-out war with the human Imperials is a losing proposition; however, there are ancient Eldar artifacts on this planet, items of power far too great to fall into

inferior human hands. You must therefore send localized war parties to retrieve these heirlooms before the humans can find them. You soon realize that something very strange is happening on Davinuus, something involving the Alien-like Tyranids.

The campaign plot doesn't sound remarkably different from that of a dozen other science fiction computer games, but in RITES OF WAR, the Warhammer 40,000 environment makes all the difference.

There are literally volumes dedicated to the description of the Eldar, Imperial, and Tyranid races, and the depth of this development is obvious when examining the Encyclopedia included in RITES OF WAR

Unit variety is the game's spice, with 33 types of Eldars, 18 each of the Imperial Forces, and the Tyranids. Unit types include Infantry, Scouts, Assault, Aerial, Devastator, War Machines, Artillery and "Psykers" (psychic

power specialists). The visuals of the squads are detailed and tantalizing, from the huge Eldar War ing Tyranid Camifex. detailed graphics is that the units are very large, and not Space Marine

Walkers to the terrify-The drawback of the scaled to each other or to the terrain. So a infantry icon is the



same size as a huge War Walker, and both icons dwarf the surrounding mountains and forests.

The game interface is very smooth and point-and-click simple. Icons have a "strength plate" that displays the strength, remaining movement and attacks, and psychic influence all at a glance.

This Land Is My Land

Not surprisingly, RITES OF WAR plays like a lot like a game of PANZER GENERAL II, There's a deliberate "rock/scissors/paper" feel to it, with every unit having specific strengths and weaknesses. The



Requirements: Pantum 200, 69M8 RAM, 209MB hard driva space. 30 Support: Naha, Maltiplayer Support: LAM, Internal (2-4 players), one CD per player.

Publisher: Red Ork Entertainment - Developer: SSI - \$58 - www.ssienline.com ESRB Ruting: Tuen; naimated blood and visionce.

Lands of Asheron INSIDE: i oflow thousands the ugh the pr A slice of the Dereth estiany Orienteente the vast Asperons Call

Asheron Beckons You to

Encounter three cultures, thousands of adventurers, and countless monster



A rogue and a sorceress

A blodemaster and a life mage

Aluvian Realm

As the first people to answer Asheron's call and venture to Dereth, the Aluvians brought with them a strong sense of justice and right. Many an Aluvian would rather go penniless and hungry, and be on the right side of the law, than be wealthy, powerful, and thriving on the misery of others. Even decades later, their utilitarian architecture reflects these traits. Unfortunately, these cultural tendencies often lead them to rebellious and warlike ways. The most famous of the Aluvians on Dereth are the heroes Thorsten Cragstone and Elysa Strathelar. Their Aluvian values proved priceless when they led the human slaves to revolt against their insectlike Olthoi oppressors.

Gharu'ndim Domain

Descended from powerful magicians, gifted poets, and intrepid traders, many Gharu'ndim follow the belief that knowledge is power. Those lured to Dereth soon discovered they could not return home, but found the next best thing in the Amun Desert. The famed noble Musansayn led the newly arrived to these comforting sand dunes. Here, they established towns and cities and followed the Ghayaraga Yadina (the poem also known as The Dozen Roads). Skilled Gharu'ndim smiths have set up shop in many settlements and some have even started crafting their coveted sealemail armor. One such smith is Maqura al-Waryah in the settlement of Tufa.

Dereth.

. Or just come for the gold.



An archer and a warrior

Sho Nation

Trained from youth for unarmed combat, a Sho is never defenseless. The elders use martial arts as a foundation for instilling the four principles called the Stones of Jojiii. discipline, detachment, compassion, and humility. This philosophy is embodied in the meticulously crafted weapon, the tach—a blade now forged in Derethian villages such as Baishi and Sawato. Although known to be reclusive, even the Sho on the homeworld of Ispar are beginning to trade with the distant Gharundim and Milantian kingdoms, Certainly, for the Sho culture on Dereth to survive, they, as well as the other humans, must start working together.

A glimpse of the Denizens of Dereth

The Reed Shark \ Terror of the Swamp

The crests of these mah-sized three-legged creatures emerging from the foliage may be the only warning of an impending attack. Often traveling in packs, these distaint cousins of the aquatic Shallows Shark and tundra-dwelling Mattekar have been domesticated by the Tumeroks. Recent arrivals, however, should avoid them at all costs.

The Virindi Masked Enigma of the Badlands

Wielding wicked-edged sickles,
these floating, mystical beings
strike fear into most sensible adventurers.
Those who don't know about their staggering
magical powers will soon find out. Travelers
should always try to take on Virindi en masse.
Lurking on the Obsidian Plain, these apparitions
mask, cloak, and conceal both their physical
appearance and their intentions on Dereth:

The Lugian Giant from the highlands

Among the mightlest of Dereth's monsters, these massive mountain-dwelling titans dwarf humans with their sheer size. Their strongholds are found across Southern Osteth, in the highlands of the Linvak Range. Even the lowest of their castes—the Laigus—can effortlessly dispatch an inexperienced explorer.

The Olthoi Scourge of the Land

The bane of the Empyrean civilization, these vile, hulking insects once enslaved all of Dereth's humans. Today, they have been vanquished to the deepest subterranean reaches. Although Derethians want nothing more than to see these abominations extinct, the hard truth remains that Dereth still needs heroes—adventurers strong and brave enough to travel into the shadowy hives and survive what honor and bounty await within.



swamps, this broad expanse lacks safe havens for the weak and weary. Newcomers are advised to steer clear of these parts. Even Fort: Tediana, the rumored human baction in the northern reaches. I es amid throngs of flarce, Tumeroks. It is far safer for unseasoned adventurers to stay in Optieth. On that side of the island, near the edge of human settlements, they can hone their skills by hunting, lesser creatures with others of like experience.



Ringed by mountains, the Sho outpost of Wai Jhou sits in relative safety.



INNER

96A

Overshadowed by Empyreain ruins, a Gramnie protects its lair from a blademaster.

Obsidian Plain

Sprawling across much of the lower Direlands is this ominous magical wasteland. Strange crystals, seeded long ago by magic gone away, jut from a sea of volcanic glass. Neophytes can expect a swift death at the hands of the clocked Virindi or other flendish creatures that roam these parts. The few veterian adventurers returning safely from here claim some Virindi carry special gerns that skilled jewelers can turn into powerful magical attracts.



An encharter hurts a deadly volley of lightning against a goldenback Tusker



The Mysterious World of Asheron

Velcome expiorers, to the mystical island of Dereth. Once called Ireth Lassal by the Empyrean many millennia ago, it is a land so vast that adventurers can trave a lifetime without seeing all its wonders. Along the way, observant travelers may discover traces of the long-lost Empyrean civilization. Even today, the call of the legendary Empyrean sorcerer Asheron lures outsiders by the thousands with promises of heroic deeds and epic quests.

Stonehold Valley

NORTHERN

Jake Luch and

Tiofor

The Empyrean magician Asheron in his hidden tower, where some say to this day he remains



Harsh, barren, and hiddled with jagged mountains and sinister

Abushin slaves



rests am d lairs of vicious where some say his tomb now

Victory comes at a heavy costs The rebal leader, Elysa Stimblelar, suffers the loss of lier beloved Thorston Cragstone

Mossworts

On a descent into the Grievous Vault, warriors face a figarsome Mu-miyah

In the Albrein town of Arvic vessels awalt their patron

Southern

osien

Linvak Range

Jerethian day glows as the

A proud adventuring party returns with a Matticker that has been ravaging the outskirts of Qalabo'r

Southern Osteth

this perilous quest. First, though, you a fellowship of friends before attempting artifacts await the intrepid. It is best to form nearby Lugian outpost. More experienced Site of the Armoredillo-ravaged Amun Desert, Mosswart-infested Blackmire must step through the portal and answer extremely treacherous descent, where Sho Gonun of Shoushi. He knows the path to an explorers should visit the Scribe Brother the scribe can direct adventurers to a Mountains, this region is also filled with Swamp, and Mattekar-plagued Linvak Asheron's call yourself. numerous labyrinthine dungeons. In Qa abair

Range reaches a boiling point

Tension's flare as a standoff in the Linvak



beckpring both thriftseekers and sightseers alike. Bring a companion bows and arrows, Just ask for the merchant Peldin Yewbender. andled between the mountain ranges, the Tlofor Woods are the Lifestone, a small shop carries an excellent assortment of southeast lies the Aluvian town of Glenden Wood. There, near home to tribes of bloodthirsty Banderlings and Tuskers. To the mysterious and deadly creatures in this area. To the southwest, now holds a placid blue take. But be warned: Some have reported to the spectacular snowy summit, where the dormant volcano The great Mount Esper towers over the Derethian landscape,



By Crastone Falls, a coungeous party gathers to luar tales of gallantry,

footholds in this immense, fertile plain. At the mouth of the River Prosper, north, the Isle of Tears rises in the midst of Lake Blessed. This island is the legendary site of the seek out suitable patrons. To the the new, Sho community Hebian-to give would be vassals a place to and the Shining Sheld Tavern to Underground City, where the hero Thorsten Cragstone dwelt







Strength in Numbers

Starting out in Dereth can be daunting. You'll lack funds, lore, weapons, and armor. Fortunately, powerful nobles are always in search of new vassals. But choose your patron wisely. The right one will not only help you on your way, but can be a valued companion. Remember, though, when you become a patron yourself, you'll rise among the nobles only as long as you put the happiness of your charges ahead of your lust for power.



🎉 — Magic System

An Incentive for Secrecy

Even with hundreds of spells in the hands of adventurers, there are hundreds more waiting to be discovered. In the ever-evolving world of Dereth, wizards are constantly vying to be the first to learn new methods of sorcery. For while a spell can be extremely powerful as long as its formula is kept to a few people, its strength-will be fleeting once too many discover and use it. Wise magic users guard their spells, knowing those who control the most knowledge wield the most power.



Character Greation

An Identity All Your Own

With distinct heritage groups, nearly limitless facial features, and an array of clothing to choose from, the powerful character creation system makes it very unlikely you'll encounter two adventurers who look exactly alike. What's more, you'll select from a mix of skills and attributes from a myriad of options—all the way from the martial disciplines befitting a blademaster to the mystical arts of the sorcerer. In both appearance and talents, you'll be as unique in Dereth as you are in the world where you how reside.



Answer the Gall







Microsoft: com/games/asheronscall

key to success is discovering which squads are effective against and which are vulnerable to other squad types Like any good strategy game, if you simply throw all of your cool-looking warriors at the enemy, you'll end up as reptile food.

Winning requires using effective combinations of your resources; for example, using stand-off weapons to weaken the enemy before closing in for melae combat, and keeping support fire close enough to contribute to tough battles. Add tionally, "Strategies" are available for purchase before a scenario – the equivalent of Strategy cards in the miniatures game. These can turn the tide of a battle; for instance, using a Sabotage strategy on an enemy artiflery unit will cause it to explode when it fires.

Another immersing aspect of RITES OF WAR is an RPG component. You can name your units and watch them grow up to 10 levels in experience. A basic Eldar unit may eventually gain enough experience to reach Exarch status, an extremely formidable fee. It's easy to become attached to a squad that you've named and has proven itself in numerous battles, advancing in skills and effectiveness. However, it's also quite difficult to keep your guys alive long enough to bond with them. Most sce narios are very evenly matched, as the Al examines your army before battle and adjusts the its forces to match

your army's level and composition. Frequently the result is baltles of attrition, with you winning by the skin of your teeth and leaving the battlefield with considerably fewer units than when you began.

Give Me More

While there are a couple of mini-campaigns (three scenarios each) from the viewpoint of the Imperials and the Tyranids, the heart of the game is the 24-scenario full campaign covering the Eldar's attempts to right the wrongs on Davinuus. Beyond the absorbing story, the campaign maintains interest by offering a wide range of victory conditions, such as assassinating a key enemy leader, rescuing fellow warriors, finding and recovering a key artifact, and search and destroy missions. The problem is that there is only one full campaign, albeit a campaign that is fairly difficult to complete. True, you can replay the game and try out different army compositions, but the surprises originally presented in the plot will be gone. There is a scenario editor that will hopefully result in a wealth of battles appearing on the Internet. Still, one longs for a campaign involving the Imperials and the Tyranids that has the same plot quality of the Eldar campaign.

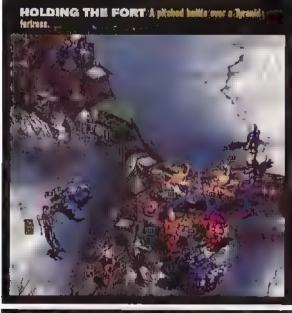
However, it is a tribute to the engrossing qualities of RITES OF WAR that the player finishes the campaign longing for more. If you have any interest in science fiction and strategy gaming, RITES OF WAR is a must GGT.

<u> Tabletop vs: Computer</u>

I you're a tableton Warbenimer 40,000 for interested in HITES OF WAR, at it you've played fittes OF WAR, and are ourlous about its miniatures origin, you may be wondering what the key differences are. The first abvisus differences is that in the tabletop game, a unit represents a single entity, while in fittes OF WAR accident represents a squall. This results in a significant difference in the seasons faction of battle. Additionally, strengths and weak-increase of units have been medified to avoid deminating invincible units and to ensure balance. Finally, RITES OF WAR presents a very small subset of the vast Warhammer 40,000 universe, as a visit to any Warhammer 40,000 website will demonstrate. Check out some of the sites below.

www.portest.not graw.thewarp.net/wkammer www.games-workshap.com/Warkammer4&k/40kintra.himi







How a Funky-Walking Girly-Man Saved the Universe

The Fonz as Savior



magine a typical American action film, made by Belgians and then translated back into English. The plot: a Homeric epic somewhere between the Bible and Stargate. The hero: part Fox Mulder, part Jesus part The Fonz; a burly U.S. Navy Seal who walks like a runway model with a wedgie. Add to the mix a truly great music score, worthy of any blockbuster movie, performed by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. A strange mish-mash of elements to be sure, but the result is an extremely entertaining bit of interactive theatre. And what a refreshing change it is to have an experience on your computer that gives you the satisfaction you would normally only

receive from a good book or mini-series.

A well done 20 minute trailer opens up the game and sets up the story. You play Cutter Stade (an American name only Europeans could think of), one of the United States' best soldiers. Some kooky scientists were fiddling around and found a way to send a probe to a parallel uni

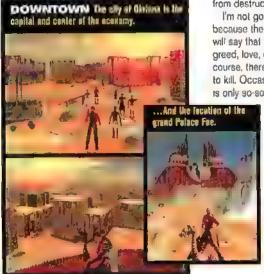
verse, but got in over their heads. Basically, they screwed up so bad that the whole planet will get sucked into a void unless someons travels through to the other side and fixes up the probe. Of course, you're the poor sod stuck with the job, scientists tagging along.

You wake up in this strange parallel world with no gear, and no idea where the others are. Luckily, the creatures that found you are friendly and somehow speak some broken English. At this point, the game begins.

Stranger in a Strange Land

There is so much to learn about this new universe that you feel like a tourist dropped into a foreign land. You can't really understand what people are talking about half of the time. You don't know where to go, who to talk to, or what to do. The process of learning about this new place is made easier, though, by the use of your notepad and lexicon.

Every time you learn the meaning of a new word, you automatically put an entry into your lexicon so you can look it up later Your notepad works the same way, but is





All you know is

that you are supposed to fix the probe, but you don't have any idea where it is. The locals, as it turns out, think you were sent down by the gods to save them. This complicates matters, because they are all willing to help you but also expect you to act as their prophesied savior. This means you have to run around doing favors for everyone before they will have faith in you and help you on your mission. The wise-ass Cutter Slade makes an unlikely savior indeed, but ultimately, you'll fulfil the prophecy in spite of yourself and save both worlds from destruction.

I'm not going to tell you any other specifics about what happens, because the whole fun is experiencing it yourself for the first time. I will say that there is everything you could ask for in a good plot here greed, love, corruption, faith, trust, oppression, and revolution. Of course, there are also cool weapons, plentiful ammo, and lots of stuff to kill. Occasionally you will find it fairly predictable, and the dialogue is only so-so at times, but hey, you try writing a screenplay for a

movie that's 50 hours long.

The Undiscovered Country

Once your adventure begins, you will find that you are not restricted by traditional levels with doors between them. There are a couple of very cool boss like characters, but you can deal with them at your lesure. You are pretty much free to go where you please and do whatever you wish. The developers have used some subtle (and not so subtle) ways of corralling you into the plot, however, You can't kill too many innocents, because your reputation will go through the floor and make it impossible to progress. I also ran into a couple instances where my playing style conflicted with



Requirements: Pentum-II 200 MMX, 500MB tyz hard dra'n space. 32MB RAM. Recommended Requirements: Pentum-II 300, 54Mb RAM. 6X 5B RDM drive.
3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support: None.

Publisher: Infegrames - Besigner: Appual - \$40 - www.integrames.com ESNB Rating: Teen; animated blood and violence; strong language

WHAT GERMANS REALLY DO BEST!

Designed and developed in Germany by Wings Simulations, Panzer Elite" is paised to take the high ground as the most realistic platoon-based WWII tank simulation yet seen for your PC.

Germans Do Details

Models created from original tank blueprints and accurate measurements from actual working WWII tanks at the Panzer Museum in Munster, Germany.

Garmans Do Powerful Game Engines

Woods are made of individual trees and bushes. Different terrain affect movement and performance. Destructible buildings, trees and foliage provide realistic tactical options.

Germons Do Interfaces

Fully supports any combination of mouse, keyboard and joystick. The Tank-Mouse Interface and pop-up windows allow easy access to all necessary controls and commands.

Germans Do Historical Accuracy

80 historically accurate missions covering Normandy, Sicily, Italy and North Africa. Features Instant Action, Single Mission and Full Campaign modes of play.

Germans Do More Than Just Tanks Featuring over 80 different units including infantry and 22 playable tanks.

Germans Do Realism

With over 30 realism settings, Panzer Elite accommodates the distinct needs of novice and hard-care players. However, Germans only play while using the highest realism settings.

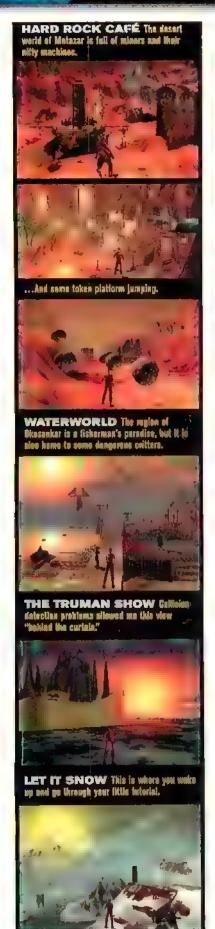
Germans Do Network Play

Supports up to 6 players over LAN, modem or serial link, 4 players via Internet.

VANZE



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the expectations of the scripting engine, but this was more of an annoyance, as nothing game-stopping occurred.

Outcast uses a voxel-based engine, which is useful for making large, open outdoor environments, but the downside is that it doesn't support 3D accelerators, infogrames will tell you that this is a feature, making the game playable on practically any machine, but this is rubbish. In truth, it still looks like crap on slow machines, just in its own special way. I played it on a Celeron 300A at home (not overclocked) and it ran pretty well, but it would bog down when there was a lot of on screen action. On a PII 450, it ran great, Just like any system hogging flight.

sim though, once you've seen it on a good rig, you won't want to play it on anything else.

My one real beef with the game relates to the camera control and weapon aiming. Probably due to the limitations of the engine, you can't look up or down very far. This totally bites when there is someone shooting at you from above, and you can't even look up far enough to see them. The auto-aiming function will latch on to these targets, but only some of the time, invariably it will fail you at the worst possible moment. There is a first-person mode, but this is made almost entirely useless by the fact that when you try to aim up or down, your gun will annoyingly "bounce" back to the center.

There were also numerous times when I was in a confined space between two walls, and the camera — confused while looking for a good spot — would suddenly fly up to the roof two stories up. This wouldn't be so bad if it didn't drag me along with it. Of course, I was never meant to be up there, so like Wyle E. Coyote, after looking around for a moment, I would fall through the roof, down two stories, and lose half my health. Thanks a lot!

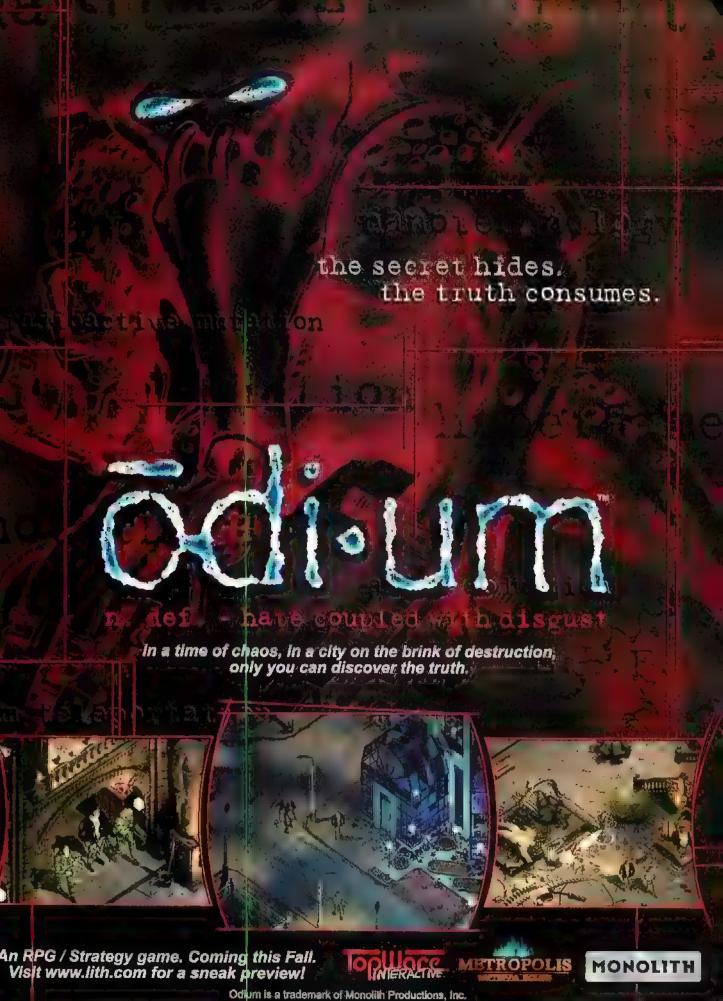
Fantastic Voyage

Despite some minor annoyances, I felt a real sense of accomplishment and satisfaction after I finished OUTCAST. I really got attached to all the funny characters and the universe in which I had spent about 60 hours. Whenever I got borad, or thought something was too obnoxious, the game would be right there making fun of itse I and Throwing me a change-up. There were also some jokes and surprises at the very end that were so hilanous that they left me with a very positive feeling about the whole experience. There are lots of elements borrowed from RPG and adventure games here that should make this game familiar and enjoyable to gamers who dig those genres. But OUTCAST is such an accessible game that everyone who enjoys a good story should give it a try

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TalonSoft Covertly Jumps into the Tactical Sim Genre

Hidden Agenda

ocusing on small-unit commando action during the second World War, HIDDEN & DANGEROUS (H&D) is wargaming veteran TalonSoft's entry into the growing tactical sim genre. Can a title without the hightech razzle dazzle of a game like RAINBOW SIX compete in this burgeoning sub-genre? Oh, yes. Yes indeed.

Who Dares, Wins

H&D's operations are spread across 23 real-world commando missions, letting you lead your elite team of British SAS troopers (from both first and third-person perspectives) behind enemy positions to rescue downed

allied pitots, disrupt German communications, kidnap German high officials, or destroy enemy strongholds. The six linear campaigns range in location from Italy, Yugoslavia, Germany, and Norway to

the North Sea and Czechostovakia. Your four-man team is formed by choosing from a pool

of 40 SAS operatives. Each soldier possesses five readily applicable abilities - shooting, reaction, stealth, strength, and endurance. Missions are won or lost depending on the operatives' skills and how aptly they're applied. For instance, your snipses should have the highest shooting skill while your bazooka gunner should possess the highest endurance and strength. Picking the right combination of men for each mission makes a crucial difference, so you'll really need to think before entering a mission.

Outlitting your team is another enjoyable part of the overall strategy; choosing weapons and equipment tailor-made for missions is essential. Arms include lightweight submachine guns like the Sten, sniper-rifles like the Lee Enfield 303, and heavy arms like the Bren machine gun. And there's plenty of equipment to boot: binoculars, cameras, decoders, combat knives, grenades, anti-tank mines, and TNT. If you run out of ammo or equipment, your troopers can pick up weapons and supplies off dead enemy soldiers - a nice, realistic touch. Of course, some gamers won't want to bother with all this

planning, so H&D has a handy auto-setup feature that outlits your team so you can head right into the mission

H&D excellently balances action and strategy. Like most tactical sims, the game requires a deft combination of shooter skills and tactical savvy. However, the design takes it one step further by implementing a readily available, real-time strategy screen for hot seat planning. This map screen can be activated any time to quickly coordinate and control operatives. Move one commando up a hill to snipe at enemy soldiers while ordering another to blow up a tank, then move to take out a guard tower. The strategy screen is your best

HOME WRECKERS Ginn Interiors like this harages besuty only add to the

sonse of apprating in Europe given WWII.

mate, because it's where you'll regroup when the going gets tough. Voice command keys also come in handy if you need quick support.

Other interface components could have used more tweaking. Even though there is a save feature, there's no way to restart the mission. without having to toggle back through a slew of set-up screens.

Hard as the Rock of Gibraltar

H&D is an extremely challenging game even at the easiest of settings. Engaging the enemy without a meticulous plan will kill you faster than you can pull a pin from a grenade, German soldiers don't ait around while your commandos haphazardly flounce around a mission. They actually sneak up or flank you during the middle of a tire-

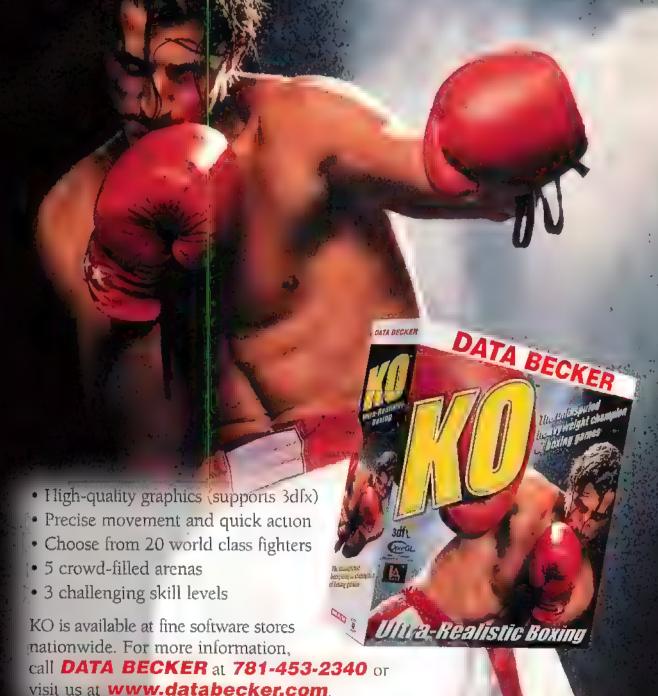




Repubrements: Portion 186 MMX, 16M6 RAM, 10M6 hard drive space, 3D card. Recommended Requirements: Portion 266 MMX, 32M6 RAM, 160M6 hard drive space, 8MB 30 card. 30 Support: Birect30. Multiplayer Support: Serial, modem connection (2 players), LAH, Internet (2-4 players), sne CO per player,

Publisher: TalenSeft + Developer: Illusion Softworks + \$50 + www.talencett.com HSAC Rating: Violence 3 (of 4); bland and gare.

LTRA-REALISTIC PC BOXING THAT WILL MAKE YOU BLEET









Outpost.com

Sniper Strategies

hen picking your salpers, always select eperatives with exceptional sheeting abilities. Each mission should include a salper in the plans with a backup just in case. Pack your salper with ample amanats of amore, since you'll be using him to take down the majority of equales. Study the strategy map in order to identify favorable terrain for salper positions.

Study the strategy map in order to identify favorable terrain for sulper positive ing. Support your markemen with another operative when you move him to optimal high ground—a machine gumar with a high rection more is count for this, especially in wide-open terrain. A machine gumar's high rate of fire and decent range compliments the sulper periodly, making them a lather combination of target interdiction and suppression fire.

Make sure you crouch or lie down before your skiper time. This will decrease your changes of getting bit. Aim for the bend when alcotting since a direct bit will kill your mighty court of the lime.

When using enipers to assault hulidings and enclosed areas, use cauties. Their low rate of fire can library them if there's more than one enough blazing away at your eniper.

ME'S THE MAN you uniper is your primary teel in taking out the enemy. Wake sure he's get adequate support and leads of amme.



fight. But the toughness of the missions only heightens the great sense of fun. HIDDEN & DANGEROUS plays like being in a great WWII movie — intensely suspenseful, heart-pounding action where danger turks around every corner, behind every fallen tree, inside

every trench. Weather effects, buildings, and terrain create an eerie wartorn almosphere. This is commendable, considering the limitations of the graphics and the fact that the game features only two types of enemy sodiers—officers and grunts.

The Al is downright nasty. Germans shoot with pinpoint accuracy and they a ways seem to know when you're coming. My advice: shoot first or die. Still, the Al isn't perfect. Germans will stroll over dead comrades bodies

without blinking, and your own team members may shoot you in the back.

H&D's ballistics suffer from a lack of realism. Shoot a German soldier a few times in the arm and he'll quickly die, but shooting him squarely in the chest only pisses him off. Headshots are the only oneshot, one-kill wonders. Also, it feels as if all rounds -- from a high calliber machine gun to a pistor -- have the same impact on a target.

H&D also offers a cooperative multiplayer feature. You join forces with up to three players to take on the computer in single

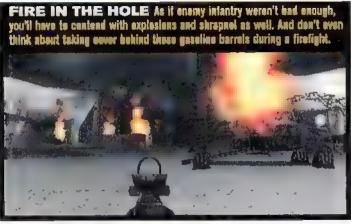
player campaign missions

With no re-spawning, learn communication is truly vital is not you'll need to work effectively as a group to beat the challenging Al. One bad decision may cost you the entire mission.

Unfortunately a few bugs do crop up. If you re unlucky you can slip down the side of an escarpment and die snipor roticules can disappear or your commandos might die by walking through walls

But HIDDEN & DANGEROUS smarl unit

tactics and taut action eventually win out over the bugs, freaky ballistics, and Al quirks. The strategic depth and riveting action should please armchair generals and shooters alike, white WWII bufts will appreciate its real stic depiction of elite force operations Addictive, entertaining, what more do you need?



TRADING PLACES Not only can you fileh weapons from fallon anomics, you can snot their uniforms so well. Cormon solitors healtate when seeing disjuised SAS Commandos in Gorman uniforms, so salt up.



ALL ABOARD One of the game's best features is the ability to interset with and use a variety of enemy, vehicles. Just wetch out for the Feazers...



YOUR FAVORITE BATTLEFIELD NOW HAS A NEW DIMENSION

xperience a realistic look and fee unprecedented in strategy gaming. Position your weapons and troops on a NEW 3D pattlefield where tanks can explode forests can burn and cities can be destroyed. Indiffs more than just great looking. Panzer General 3D Assault features a NEW, simple and addictive game system. Promote dismiss or reassign your WWII commanders your strategic decisions will determine the power of your forces.

ACTUAL GAME ARTWORK

PANZIER 3D GRUPPAL

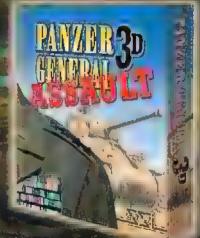
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Manage leadership assignments to customize your army for battle.



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Finally, a Star Trek Game for the Kirk-and Klingon-in All of Us

True Trek At Last!



ith STARFLEET COMMAND the curious and not wholly ignoble history of Star Trek computer games finally has a product worthy of Kirk, Spock, and the rest of the classic crew.

Based on the STARFLEET BATTLES board game and perhaps benefiting from BATTLES' breadth and depth of experience, here at last the interactive universe feels like Star Trek. And that universe overlays a plot that is very much in keeping with the classic Trek universe, a dangerous place.

Despite Trek's innate emphasis on the Federation, to play only from the Federation's point of view would overlook the richness of the game's campaign sequence. The campaign structure fairly quickly reveals itself to be much more than just a straightforward

> progression through ranks and increasingly complex assignments. Without giving too much away, be aware that the campaign

aequences should

INSIDE INFORMATION A library

of ship types and comprehensive vessel intern

Lien gives you the chance to explore the took-

nelegies of species you may face in space.

STARFLEET COMMA

be played from each of the game's empires

In the best tradition of Trak, the campaign reveals that not just the political balance of power is threatened, but in some ways the whole labric of the universe. The size of the threat becomes larger with each successfully completed mission.

Ultimately, the campaign sequence comes to feel almost like a movie or multi-part episode; in some ways closest to a Star Trek

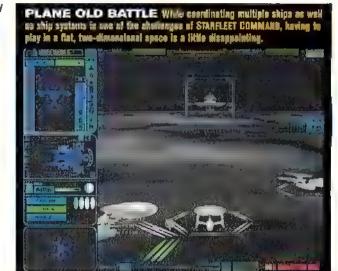
novel. It's gratifying to see plot taken as seriously as playability - and STARFLEET COMMAND succeeds at both.

Care has been game to communicate the flavor of each race. Effective use of color and graphics establish the fundamental differences among the various races. While

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the basic interface remains similar enough race to race to be relatively intuitive, the differences in design and appearance serve to remind you that the goals (and tactics/weapons systems) of, say, the Lyrans differ from those of the Klingons.

This is very much a game of multiple systems and systems management, requiring players to coordinate helm, security, science, defense and offense, communications, and more, all of it in the heat of battle. Fortunately, the command screens and sub-screens are thoughtfully laid-out. Tutorials and random non-campaign missions also help.

The essentially mercantile approach to rising through the game's ranks might trouble purists. You earn points for missions successfully accomplished, and use those points to upgrade and refit your ships. The library of available ships with increasingly powerful systems is an additional spur up the career ladder. Remember, though, you can only buy tools - you must learn the skills to use them well.

Space scenes look great, with various ships, starbases, and planets well rendered. One large weakness of the game, though, is its 2D combat plane, Combat takes place along an axis rather than throughout a globe, which is the game's only major drawback.

The game contains a variety of riches that add to replayability. The political universe comprised of the game's races evolves and changes with your success or failure at various missions. The campaign sequence introduces familiar figures that further contribute to the Trek-ish verisimilitude

Unfortunately, some of that universe's most familiar icons and scenarios appear to be available only on discs purchased directly from Interplay. This is a shame, because everyone ought to be able to take on the challenge of "Balance of Terror" or rest in the heart of a nebula when facing Khan.

Bogus marketing schemes aside, this is a terrific game. Trek fans have waited a long time for a computer game that captures the richness of the Star Trek universe. STARFLEET COMMAND is that game, and it is rich and deep enough to keep most of those fans busy until the next time the universe is endangered. (GGE)

Requirements: Paulum 200, 32MB RAM, 25DMB hard drive space. • Recommended Requirements: 64MB RAM, 30 accelerator. 3D Support: Direct 3D • Musteplayer Support: Modem, Serial connection (2 Players), LAN, Internot (2-6 players); one 60 per player,

Publisher: Interplay • Developer: 14 Degrees East and Quicksilver Software, Inc. • \$50 • www.interplay.com ESRE Rating: Everyone.



A quick chat with Phillip Campbell, Senior Designer at Eidos Interactive, who has worked closels with the Quantic Dream team over the last two years......

Omikron: The Momad Son What is it?!?!?!!?

Omikron: The Normad Soul is a futuristic mail-time adventure that, is being developed by a talensed development group in Paris, Quantic Dream. The game's ambitious storyline and gameplay elements trainscend the narrow confines of traditional gamens combining a deep game plot with adventure, exploration, action, combat and role-playing elements in order to fully inwerse gamers into the Ordikron world.

What is your title and role for Omikron?

I'm the Senior Designer, or Eldos Interactive (USA), and have been walking the streets of Omikron for over two years "maintaining Eldos Interactive's commitment to design:" Basically that incomes and of everything! Concept and level design, additional story, voice-talent wrangling, translations, integrating the Bowle species of the game. Of course I'm always in total agreement with my two producers, Herve Albertazzi in the UK and shadowspeakeer Tom Marx in the US Minost always.

if possible, put Onlikron's story in a "nutshell."

The game of Omikron is essentially a trap from the moment you walk into your local shop and set the Omikron box on the shelves you're playing the game, being lured into the trap. Imagine a device similar to the Heilraiser cube, it's a compelling and beautiful object that you MUST explore. Omikron is a parallel universe, existing in real-time alongside Earth, and once your soul is projected into its dark streets there is no turning back until you succeed, or fail, You arrive in

Omikron in possession of a body you do not know, for reasons you cannot fathom. From this point on you will have to talk, investigate, fight, drive, shoot ride and explore your way to the conclusion of the game - and gain deliverance from this strange dimension.

David Cage, the boss of Quantic Dream, has spent over three years creating his singular, unique vision of Omikron - it's all we can do to keep up with his flights of imagination!

How many characters can you possess (upon death)? Is there a limit? Are they all fleshed out in this 'world city'?

There are about 40 characters and you can "incamate." This may be as a result of death or oy your own choice. One of the skills you develop is













onikkon

the ability to freely choose who you will be next. Death is by no means "The End." In Omikron, the player never has to "Quit," simply, the next person that arrives at the scene of your demise becomes you.

Once you gain the ability to incarnate other characters, the only limit is the strength of your skill You may happen upon a body you are particularly keen on, say outside the Arena, or in the local Pharmacy. Then, it's a matter of your mana strength as to whether you can project your soul into that character or not. Each character you can play has many traits, everything from a name to a unique skill set. Some characters even have apartments, jobs, or family. Some are better at certain skills than others, you may find it easier to fight if you are in possession of a strong, fast character, or you may find it easier to sneak through a forbidden installation in

the quise of a Guard. One of the pleasures of the game occurs when you take on a new character as you pick up some of the threads of THEIR life. You may find yourself diverted from your main purpose to, for example, spend more time "interacting" with your new wife, or helping Jorg to become "Master of the Arena." Incarnate as a Taar Monk, and you will not only gain access to the secret fighting techniques of the Taar, but also may feel a spiritual need to "walk the planet," misquoting religious tracts and writing bad poetry!

Tell us about the engine capabilities.

Phewl Of course it's not just about technical capabilities, glossy special effects and variety of big guns, the measure of Quantic's success lies in whether they've succeeded in making an immensely playable and REAL world to expenence. Here's some of what you get!

- A full-featured first-person shooter engine, with mouse control, intelligent enemies and interactive, cinematic interludes.
- A totally 3D fighting engine, with combos, special moves, each fighter and opponent with unique styles.
- A revolutionary 'learning' system not only can
 you research and learn the rudiments of good
 investigation technique (adventuring, if you
 will) but fighting and shooting skills can be
 constantly improved. In shooting, players can
 learn their skills and practice different weapons
 at the many virtual shooting galleries throughout the city. You may even get some insight
 into guerrilla tactics from Krill, the resident
 weaponry expert. For fighting, most characters
 have access to pritual training centers, where
 they light holographic enemies, and later,
 masters of the fighting arrayill demonstrate

and teach the player new moves, combos etc. And, of course, if you're brave enough, there's always the Arena...

- The ability to explore many diverse zones of the city surrounded by hundreds of passers-by and vehicles. Every door has something behind it, adding to the richness of the story. Add to this over 40 possible reincarnations and over a hundred speaking characters...
- Full body and facial motion capture for the first time ever in a game, coupled with hours of diatogue. In Omikron, conversations are never static!
- Realistic day/night cycles, random snow and rain.
- Virtual concerts and a fully cinematic "gametrack" of original music.
- A cohesive and dynamic story, in the mould of the classic adventure games of the past, with a scenario that starts

perhaps reminiscent of the Blade Runner genre, but develops into something altogether more magical...

 Oh, ok then....DAZZLING special effects and REALLY BIG GUNS!!!

Here's Omikron in figures:

- More than 400 different sets in four huge cities
- More than 140 types of characters in 30 real-time
- More than 300 objects that can be manipulated
- Hundreds of passers-by and vehicles move about in the streets
- Two years to write the scenario
- 3.9 kilos of game design.

Death

is by no

means

The End"

in

Omikron

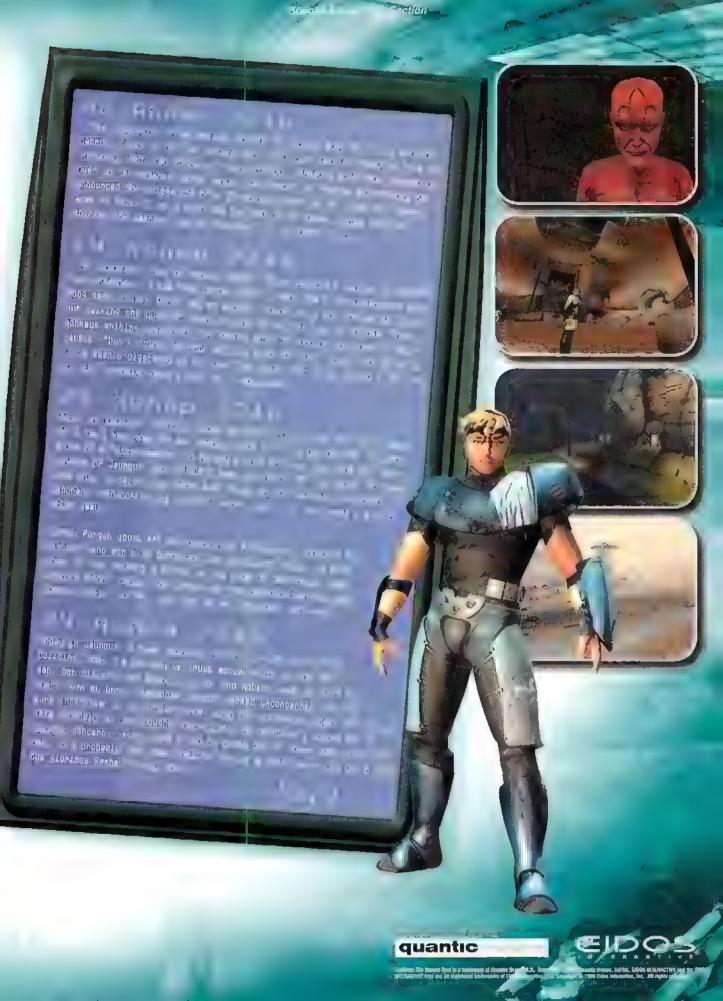
- Thousands of sketches in the graphical design.
- Four hours of dialogues with more than 1200 responses
- 693 moves in motion capture
- 35 people working over three years, including 11 programmers
- 489 pizzos, 302 hamburgers, 71 chicken pineapples with Cantonese rice, 894 litres of Coke
- 411 taxı bills

Equals - one realistic world, complete gaming freedom, who will you be next?

Everyone, hard-core gamers, and novices afike, all start from the same place — alone, confused, scared. It's up to you and your soul to decide what to do next. Take advantage of the training, or just pile straight in? Go shopping, or go shoot something? Talk or fight? Follow the noble cause and save Omikron, or just hang about your apartment listening to cool music - it's all up to you....

Q and A courtesy of C/Net's Gamecenter.com





Special Advertising Section

TOMB RALDE LAST REVELATION

And SET sayeth: 'I am the shadow across the sun; I am the bringer of plagues. My wrath will consume all lands and shall be ceaseless.

gypt, Land of mythology, mystery, pharaohs... and the most complex tombs known to man. Tombs littered with mazes, puzzles and traps, designed to drive even the most persistent raiders to distraction... or death. Enter: Lara Croft. Based entirely in Egyptian locations, The Last Revelation's plot revolves around ancient mythology and the alignment of the stars at the millennium. Finding herself in a serious predicament, Lara's objective is clear from the outset—she must escape a terrifying destiny and rectify algituation that threatens to destroy humanity.

The story is unveiled seamlessly through gameplay action driven by advanced engine technology. New programming routines allow levels to dissolve into cinematic cut-scenes and full motion video (FMV). Loading screens are eliminated, making the adventure a continuous, focused experience. Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation's redesigned inventory system replaces traditional inventory rings with an easier-to-use interface allowing items to be combined, collected and stored. The new inventory also features Lara's diary, which includes her personal notes.

nom each acceptive and a location map that players can access for hints and tips. Application of the transformed system will give new life to puzzle elements — a key feature of Tomb Raider. The Last Revelation. Clear objectives and smaller locations will result in less time spent traveling between areas. Individual environments are more reminiscent of the original game - tightly focused and puzzle-oriented, but with higher levels of detail and a greater number of objects than seen before.

The atmosphere will also be more akin to the original due to the amphasis on ancient locations and tombs. To further the atmospheric detail, the lighting system features spotlighting. New environment mapping allows a variety of surfaces and objects to reflect and react to light sources. Lara herself will have a new remodeled look — fully skinned and more detailed. A range of new moves, both simple and complex, provides an assortment of brand new puzzle and trap mechanisms for Lara to negotiate. The puzzles are based on Egyptian mythology and will operate like complex board games right at the player's fingertips.









Interview with Adrian Smith of Core Design

So what's the plot this time?

Wo've made the basis of the story a lot simpler this time around - the player is given a very clear objective from the outset. The plot will twist and turn as Lara progresses, but the ultimate goal always remains in sight.

Very basically, Lara inadvertently releases something rather nasty whilst breaking into an ancient tomb... and of course she's the only one who can put things right. The path of true adventure never runs smooth so Lara will have various tasks to complete before she's able to face a final confrontation.

Do you fear a backlash against this title since it is the 4th in the series?

Despite any number of new features and improvements, the game is still, in essence, "Tomb Raider" - an adventure game featuring Lara Croft. What we have done this time is completely re-address a number of key elements. This will immediately distinguish Last Revelation from its predecessors and bring fresh life to the title. The on-screen format is completely new - gone are the old inventory rings, loading screens etc. It's always been our intention to make the fourth game as accesslble to as many people (both old fans and new users) as possihie. We've focused on simpler gameplay so the game will be easier that TRIII in terms of direction and objectives. Players will know exactly what to do, and where they have to do it, The difficulty lies in solving the puzzles that will enable players to complete objectives - so It's very much like the original game in that respect. A very clear storyline and single location means that a lot less time is wasted covering vast distances.

In some ways Last Revelation is a prequel to the trilogy, but the technical advances will make it far more detailed and atmospheric. If you've never played a Tomb Raider game, this is the one that we'll be recommending!

Can you tell us about any of the new enemies that Lara will face?

We're concentrating on highly detailed enemies - there may be fewer of these but they will certainly be more purposeful than those seen in previous titles. Since we're dealing with Egypt, our artists and animators have really been able to let their imaginations go so we've





got mythological baddies as well as natives and generics. Due to the nature of the plot, you'll find a lot of rather strange things happening and don't be surprised if you find that your are pitting your skill against an adversary through the adventure.

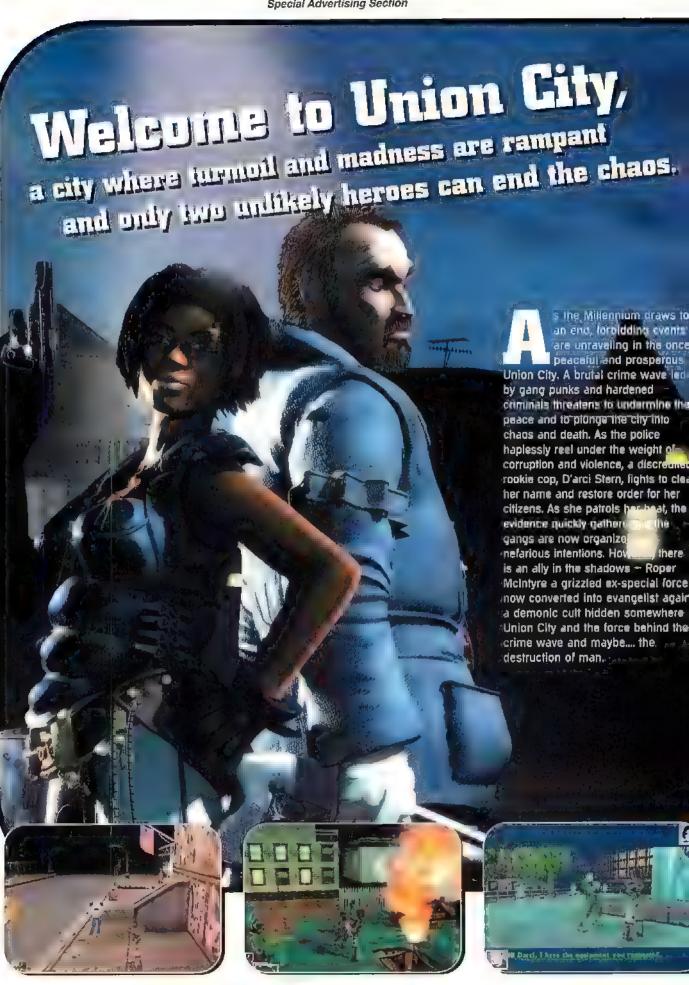
Will there be another game in the Tomb Raider series?

Well you know what they say... You just can t keep a good girl down..!





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RAG BG

In Urban Chaos, Mucky Foot and Eldos Interactive present a city in frouble

You play either D'arci or Roper in 30 compelling missions that each take place in a unique location of Union City. The player is rewarded with information, supplies, and secret paths if they explore the district. Several types of weapons and close combat are offered to complete goals when persuasion is not successful, but be careful, the streets are alive with the citif rail that do not each the police.

Urban Chaos starts out with D'arci Investigating various crimes from simple assaults to bank bombings. Every district she visits has its own unique look in layout, architecture, and population, interaction via text is available for all citizens. Besides a propriety 3D engine that allows for bump mapping, volumetric fogging,

and true reflections, there is also 3D laudio available via EAX and A3D protocols. D'arci will eventually meet up with Roper who quickly become like a father to her. Roper is the sole surviving member of a religious group that aims to prevent the 'Fallen' (a demonic curt) from resurrecting an abomination (from Nostrodamus's predictions) to incarcerate the earth at the turn of the millennium. His forte is heavy weapons and explosives. He is slower than arci but packs a powerful punch. exploration is another gameplay. element that is stressed, for as D'arciexplores Union City either via foot or !-! automobile, she can explore locations? that will yield not only supplies and at weapons, but secret entrances into locations where she must complete a mission. There is also a reward system: In place that offers bonuses for ... collection.

operate in the Urban Chaos and person world, Mucky Foot has created a training academy complete with a foot and vehicle obstacle course and a shooting range.

But, all in all compat is often your only recourse in dealing with the gangs. Urban Chaos not only offers close martial art combat, but has a realistic weapon combat engine including firearms, knives, grenades, and baseball bals! Narty incidents like drive-by shooting and gangland rumbly, often take place in the bad parts of town.

Coming to the PC and PlayStation, Urban Chaos stands out for its graphically impressive representation of big city life with the chaos of crime and demonic rumblings. Coupled with identifiable characters and a pumping Urban soundtrack, it literally comes alive for your enjoyment.





EIDOS.

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Radio-Control Racing Without the Batteries

Drive Me Faster, **Tiny Racer**

emember when you were a kid (or, if you're like me, last week) when you and your friends would spend summer afternoons racing remute control cars up and down the street in front of your house, darling beneath your neighbor's pickup truck, barreling through drainage culverts, and jumping the curb at the end of the driveway? RE*VOLT captures the Lili putian racing fun of RC cars and trucks, and offers some advantages over doing it for real. If your car

flips over, you can right it with a touch of a button; better yet, you can zip through supermarkels, museums, and

toy stores all the places you'd be kicked out of in real

life. But perhaps best of all, you can go along for the ride instead of just standing at the curb.

Mad Max Meets Mini-Me

Gameplay in RE'VOLT is reminiscent of other first person arcade racers I ke ROLLCAGE and WIPEOUT XL: insanely last-paced racing action, replete with missiles and whatnot for smacking other racers around. Power-ups scattered along the way arm you with bottle rockets, water balloons, oil slicks, and more. A few are "power-downs," turning your car into a time bomb, or just blowing you up on the spot.

Power-ups aside, RE*VOLT feels very realistic, especially on the simulation setting, when the cars are over-powered and squirrelly as helt. The cars are a little too stable on very long jumps - a little too likely to land, cat-like, on their wheels -

> but this fudging is necessary to allow the maps to include

insanely large jumps in the first place, so it's forgivable.

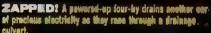
You can race a variety of cars, rated according to speed, acceleration, and weight, although other factors such as a high center of gravity come into play as you drive. Cars may be front-wheel, rearwheel or four-wheel drive; some do better on long flat tracks, while others excel at ofmbing hills or accelerating out of turns.

As you progress, new and faster cars become available, Similarly, you begin the game with only four tracks unlocked; you must win a championship comprising all four to untock new tracks.

RE'VOLT looks very sweet. The cars boast shiny highlights; polished floors reflect the action; bottle rockets send out trails of sparks

and leave lingering clouds of smoke when they explode. On a Pentium II 266 with a Voodoo 2 accelerator, the game ran smoothly at 800 x 600 with seven Al cars running, the rear-view mirror activated, and all the graphics options (except antialiasing, which didn't work) turned on,

RADIO SHACKS Whether racing in a museum or across parden bridges, RE'YOUT's race environments are beautiful to look at.





Land of the Glants

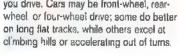
RE*VOLT's environments are nicely filled in with enormous parked cars, loose basketballs, looming dino skeletons, towering stacks of loys and what-have-you. You can hear dogs barking behind fences, and birds chirping in the trees. The cars' engines sound authentic, which means they all sound pretty much like power screwdrivers, except "Aquacar," which sounds like an electric bong.

RE*VOLT includes a track editor so you can make your own tracks, in theory at least. In reality, the editor is cheesy and surprisingly sluggish, especially considering the game's good performance. Worse, the maps I created came out white on white, making the track impossible to see. If there's a way to apply textures, I never found it

Crappy editor notwithstanding, RE-VOLT does a great job of putting RC racing on your desktop. And when

you're lired of dueling RE*VOLT's excellent Al racers, it's time to collect your friends together for some virtual RC action over LAN. modem, or the Internet. AGD





Requirements: Pastum 200, 32M8 RAM, 360M8 hard drive space, 30-accelerator. Recommended Requirements: Pastum II 233, 64M8 RAM, 8MB 30 card. 36 Support: Ginct30. Multiplayer Support: Interest, LAN (2-8 players), one CO per player.

Publisher: Acclaim Entertalnment • Developer: Acclaim Studies Landap • \$48 • www.acclaim.net ESRB Rating: Everyana



QUICK HITS

MECHCOMMANDER GOLD

Tactical, squad-level mechanized combat made MECHCOMMANDER a solid real-time strategy title. MECHCOMMANDER GOLD adds some nice touch-

es to the original game, such as unit waypoints that allow you to specify not just the direction of movement, but the type of movement your units use, like running, jumping, and even mine laying. This means you can now give your Minelayer a complex set of instructions to mine multiple areas, without having to micromanage each task. In addition

to the game tweaks, MECH GOLD adds new

Mechs and weapons, and a brand new campaign. Owners of the original game can get a

rebate from Microprose, which makes for some inexpensive gameplay; and if you never played, here's a great opportunity to see the more tactical side of the real-time strategy genre. – Greg Fortune

Genre: Strategy • Publisher: Hasbro • Doveloper: Microprose 340 • www.nicroprose.com • ESAB Rating: Teen



Genre: Simulation - Publisher, GT Interactive -Developer: WizardWorks - \$20 - www.wizworks.com - ESAB flating: Everyone



COMBAT: OPERATION VICTORY
adds 30 missions and one
adventure to MICROSOFT COMBAT
FLIGHT SIMULATOR. The adventure is inter-



esting (glide behind German lines, wreak

havoc in a stolen fighter, then escape) and the missions take place in a variety of locations, but there are no new planes (although there are a couple of new bugs). With new missions, planes, and campaigns available for free on the Internet, there's just not enough that's new or different here to give this package high marks. — Jeff Lackey

GULF WAR: OPERATION DESERT HAMMER

Genze: Action • Publisher: 300 • Developer: 300 • \$30 • www.3do.com



No need for fancy keyboard overfays in GULF WAR: OPERATION DESERT HAMMER. It's one of those so-



called "action simulation" games that

allow you to light things up like the 4th of July. As you drive the advanced prototype M12 Hammer deep into Iraq's interior and strike at good old Saddam – always willing to serve as the straight man to your missiles – you'll enjoy Gulf War's fast-paced, enjoyable arcade action. Blow away tanks, APCs, missiles, and helicopters. Call in artillery and air strikes against the more stubborn targets, or against your friends. Killing for oil hasn't been this much fun since 1991. – Lance A. Larka



FORCE 21

Genre: Strategy • Publisher: Red Storm Entertainment • \$50 • www.redstorm.com • ESRB Rahny, Teen; animated vlotence.

Force 21 is a 21st Century
wargame that pits the US against
China in 15 campaign missions. You
play a tactical commander of armored cav-

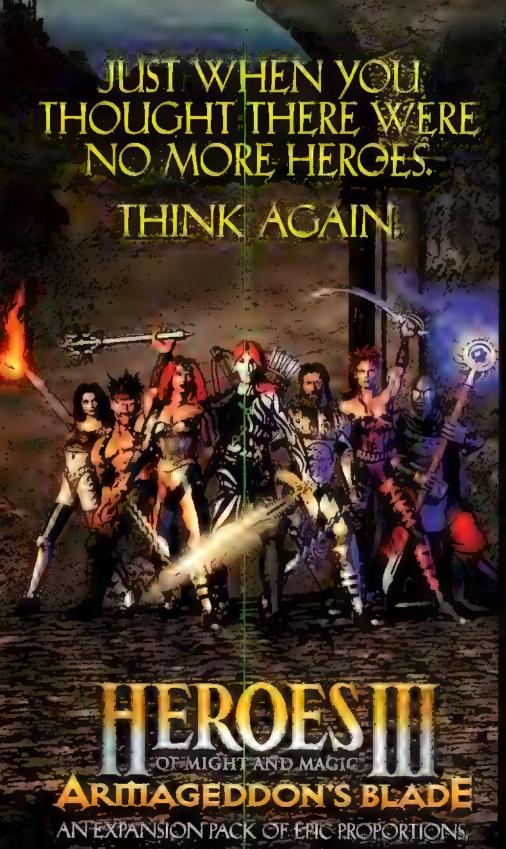
alry style forces that are split up into "platoon" like elements for

command and control purposes.

The missions don't follow your progress like they do in PANZER GENERAL or M1 TANK PLATOON II, since you cannot carry over units from scenario to scenario. Instead, you get whatever your supply officer has scrounged up that day, which is completely scripted and never varies. You do get to decide who leads the platoons, but even though the commanders have different specialties and abilities, they don't improve with time or seem to have any effect during the missions whatsoever.

Your operation and intelligence briefings are just as lackluster, as the directives boil down to "Kill all the enemy" or "Get to this locatron." Intelligence is anything but, with no reports of what the enemy forces consist of or even where they are, leaving you to figure it out on your own and usually necessitating a replay of the mission. The enemy Al is about as dumb as can be; its battle plans are hard coded and consist mainly of pre-planned movement and reactionary triggers.

There's no joy when you actually drop into the missions, either You run your platoons with a third person perspective that is locked to the unit you've selected. So you are not free to move your view around the 3D terrain to achieve fine control of your units. Also, the platoon that you are currently locked on will not take any initiative in firing. You must engage in a click-fest to target each and every enemy, making any actions quite difficult. As a result, you're forced to spend the majority of the game using the strategic screen where the controls are better, but where you can't see the fireworks. - Lance A. Larka



NEW WORLD COMPUTING



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PC CD-ROM

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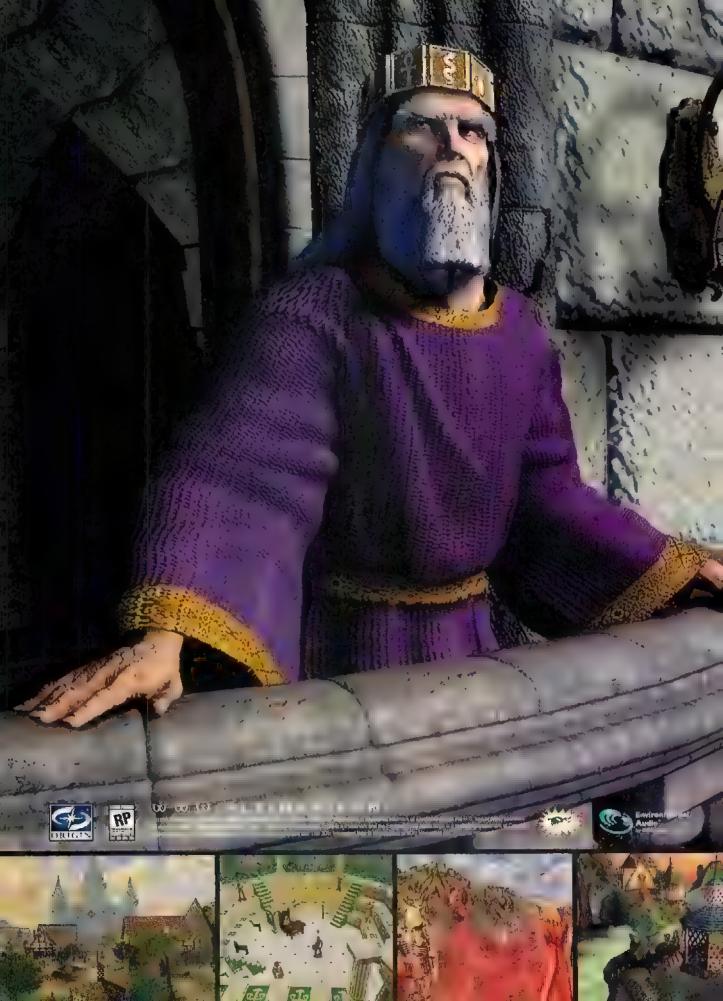
- More Than 20 New Heroes
- * SIX NEW CHALLENGING CAMPAIGNS
- New Mystical World =
 The Elemental Conflux
- * More Hero Classes
- * More Monsters
- MORE DRAGONS
- New Advanced
 Campaign Editor
- New Random Map
 Generator
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The award winning Close Combat real-time wargame series returns to action to Close Combat, Battle of the Bulge, Germany's last desperate attempt to stave off defeat in WWII, offers you the thrill and excitement of the Close Combat series with explosive new levels of tectical engagement and detail.

It's the winter of 1944 and WWILLs in full swing. The Allied troops are exhausted and the German troops are ready to strike. The fate of the world restain your hands as you command German or American troops in an intense battle filled with sneak attacks, at liwan defenders, sples and saboteurs. With courage strategy and nerves of steel, you'll be the one to decide the outcome of WWIII.

- New Campaign system allow, movement of multiple battle groups on a system; moverable Ardennes
- on their strategic movement.
- Through advanced All stress, risks at the bridge have a direct impact on your troops. If the your accordingly
- Campaigns give continuity, monthers to postation players tactical successes and failure have a direct impact on the battle's outcome.
- Accurately deploy WWII platoon was using combined arms.
- Internet players can use online matching services to find opportants. *Internet access regulared
- 🗪 Command Carman or American troops
- zpl. yers fight head-to-head in single bettle), operations and campaigns.

- Strategic game battlemaker allows you to create your own Bulge campaigns.
- Allocate artillery and air assets (weather permitting) in the Campaign and then call in support during each battle based on those strategic choices.





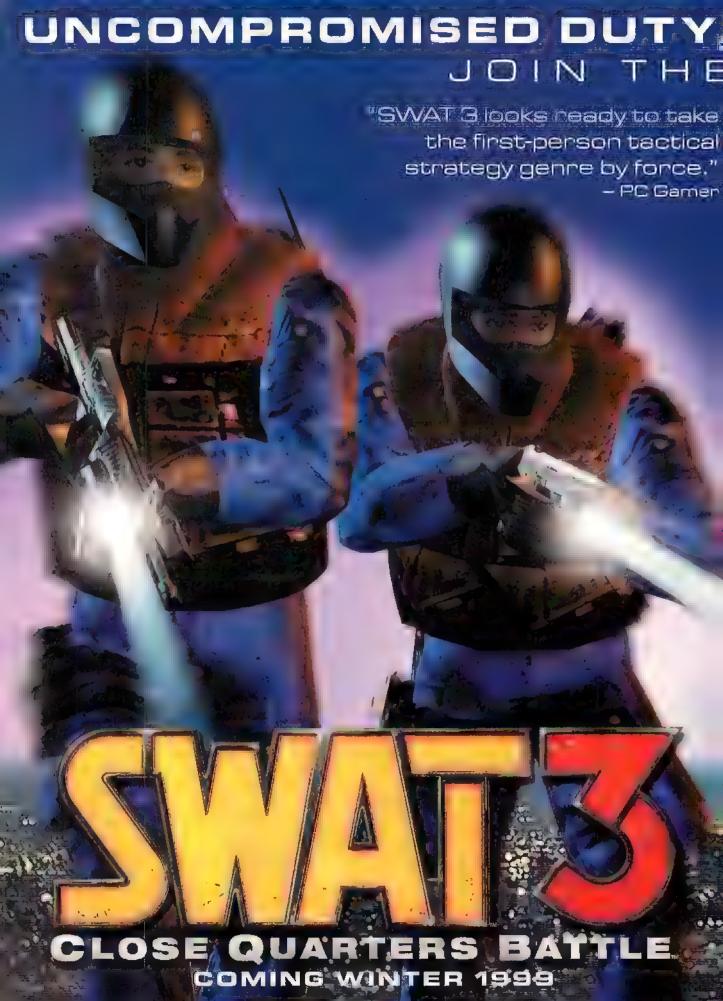


True line-of-sight and line-of-fire gameplay



An Atomic Games Wargami

However the control of the control o



HONOR AND VALOR

NOVEMBER

Los Angeles, 2005 Violence and terrorism have reached American shores and LARD SWAT Is on alert. As port of this elite toctical organization, you and your team have the weapons and all the ficining necessary to protect to serve and when needed to use deadly force to keep the beace.

Welcome to SWAI 5: Close Quarters Battle. You have at your command a five man rean prepared to take on more than 100 o f the most vicionus temporasies and caliminals itos Angeles nos to offer. Use real-life SWAT tactics eristing) of regordant to compat. PLANS I GINALING TROM TOURS INC. "Estable" no Evole estable in the lost · tour reservo. After seemen of percentage · Unlation ever created.



Lead your five-man team through 16 stunning photo-realistic missions filled: with more than 150 motion-captured characters



Unparalleled Al causes suspects and victims alike to respond individually to your every action, ensuring you'll never play one mission the same way twice



Select your team and configure their orsenal using state-of-the-ort weaponry. Utilize stealth and dynamic tactics such os "slicing the pie" and deployment of diversionary devices to outsmart your opponents



BATTIME PERMINE

HARDWARE GAMING MACHINE • REVIEWS • NEWS

VOODOO3 3500 VS. FRLCON SE KENTON

Graphics Card Showdown

Suped-up TNT2 Ultra Beats Voodoo3 3500

t's been a pitched battle between 3dfx and nVidia as to who's the current 3D king. Voodoo3 is fast to be sure, but in most testing, it's been defeated by TNT2 Ultra. Couple that with the TNT2 Ultra's more complete rendering feature set, not to mention 32-bit rendering, and the edge goes to TNT2 Ultra.

> So now we move to Round 2, which pits Voodoo3 3500 - clocked at

by Dave Salvator 183MHz and loaded with TV/video capture features - against the latest tricked-out TNT2 Ultra-based board from the dynamic duo of Guillemot and gaming system maker Falcon Northwest. Dubbed the Falcon SE Xentor, this board is

over-clocked to 195MHz, while its 32MB of memory runs at a hurtling 235MHz. These two boards squeeze as much horsepower as anyone is going to get out of this generation of chips So who's got the goods? For pure speed, Falcon SE Xentor wins the day, but the Voodoo3 3500 is no performance slouch, and still offers Glide compatibility

as well as decent TV/video features.

Speed Demon

If traffic cops gave out speeding tickets to video cards, the SE Xentor would have its license revoked. And if its blazing performance out of the box isn't enough

to satiate the hard-core gamer's appetite, Guillemot has bundled an over-clocking slider that will push the internal clock speed beyond the

coveted 200MHz barrier

Like Guillemot's mainstream Xentor32, the SE Xentor ships with a pared-down OEM version of KINGPIN. Unlike the Xentor32, however, this card will set you back \$350. Ouch. Falcon Northwest customers get \$30 off the list price. though. While the SE Xentor

clearly isn't for everyone, die-hard gaming enthusiasts might want to drop one of these into their AGP slots

The first thing you notice is the active heat sink/fan combo. It's pretty large. In its current configuration, the card will eat the PCI slot adjacent to the AGP slot. The shipping fan will be less deep but may still obstruct a bulky PCI card. Each pair of SDRAM chips also has a small heat sink attached. The card we checked out had 4 3ns SDRAM onboard, and the card will ship at a default clock rate of 195MHz for the TNT2 Ultra chip and 235MHz for the memory clock. There will also be a special over-clocking utility shipped with the card, but Guillemot and Falcon Northwest are guaranteeing 195/235.

One of the issues with highly-clocked TNT2 Ultra boards has been motherboard support. A number of motherboards do not deliver the 6 amps current at 3.3 volts to the AGP slot, as called for in the AGP hardware spec. Guillemot mitigates this some what by powering the cooling fan through the power supply with a standard connector like those found on hard drives. That should reduce the current draw a bit, but be aware that it could be an issue.

Pistols at Dawn

We tested both cards on a 500MHz Pentium III. With the sole exception of games that use the 3dfx mini-GL DRIVER (HALF-LIFE and QUAKE II), the Falcon SE Xentor bests the Voodoo3 3500. In some sense, this is not entirely an "apples to apples" comparison, as the 3500 also has TV and video capture capabilities. But TV aside, the 3500 is still 3dfx's highestclocked offering.

The Falcon SE Xentor generated the highest-ever 3D GameGauge score on our test bed, at 51.5, compared to Voodoo3 3500's 49 5. Falcon SE Xentor's 32-bit scores at 1024x768 were also quite good. And this is where TNT2 Ultra pulls ahead of Voodoo3, both in rendering feature set, as well as 32-bit rendering support. We also took a look at the Falcon SE Xentor on a Pentium III/600, where its 3D GameGauge score was upped to an impressive 57.38 (an 11% gain with the 20% increase of CPU speed).



On 2D performance, Falcon SE Xentor again squarely outguns Voodoo 3 3500, whose 2D performance is actually slower than that of a Voodoo 3 3000.

Convergence, or Lack Thereof...

First, let's dispense with the 3D question. The Voodoo3 3500 is quite fast for 3D games. It's not the fastest card we've seen in 3D GameGauge, but it's way up there. And, of course, it supports Glide, 3dfx's propnetary legacy API. If that's what you're looking for in a 3D graphics card, then this may be the card for you. So on the merits of its raw 3D performance, Voodoo 3 3500 is a contender.

making a convergence product, with onboard TV tuner, video capture. and TV display functions. It's in these key areas that 3dfx fails to deliver.

The 3500 has an onboard TV tuner made by electronics giant Philips, and also serves as an FM tuner. This part works very well, and the on-screen "remote" works well, though it lacks keyboard equivalents for all the buttons. However, the channel auto-scan only picked up about half my good cable channels; I had to manually activate the rest. Video and audio connections are made through a small, slick looking breakout box.

The TV-out is abysmal. More often than not, you get a garbled picture. Heaven help you if you try to use the TV and your computer monitor at the same time - you risk making the monitor unusable, and booting with just the TV connected is the only way to fix the problem.

> If you do get it to work, the monitor refresh rate is an ugly 60Hz, and you can't run higher than 800x600. 3dfx is aware of these problems, but chose to ship the card anyway.

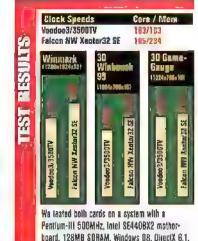
If you have a hankering to output video to a VCR, look for a different solution. Voodoo3 3500's poor video output quality is mitigated

somewhat by the ability to capture to a hard drive, and 3dfx automates time shifting of program recording to the hard drive in its control panel. But the capture quality is quite poor. If you try to use the MPEG-2 capture capabil-

ity, you're limited to 320x240, and you will drop frames at that resolution (and this was on a 500MHz Pentium III). The WmDVD software DVD player does a decent job of playback on the PIII/500, however.

All in all, if you want the fastest available Voodoo3 card around, then this is it. The convergence features with the exception of simple TVwatching on screen - still need a lot of work. The whole thing feels like a product that was shipped too early. You'd do better to get a

Voodoo3/3000 and an ATI TV Wonder PCI card, if you have the free PCI slot. GTI



and EIDE storage components.

But the 3500 is supposed to be more than that. It's 3dfx's shot at

FHOS

Requirements:

Manufacturer:

www.3dfx.com

Prices -

GADGETS FOR GAMERS

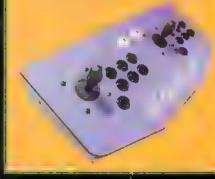
f you came to PC gaming from the arcade world maybe you still pine for the controls found on those upright consoles. What if you could go to your local arcade, rip the

Hot Rod lovstick control conso e out of one of those units. bring it home, and plug it into your PC? With HanaHo Games new HotRod joystick, you can

do just that. The unit connects via your keyboard port, and has a passthrough connector for your keyboard

This can be just the ticket for playing the old stand-up arcade games using the MACE emulator, and it'lleven do pretty well with newer sports titles, too. NFL BLITZ, anyone? At \$200 bucks, it ain't cheap, but if you want to include your arcade jones at home, then give this guy a look. - Dave Salvator

Hotrod Joystick, \$200, www.hanaha.com



INSIDE HARDWARE

Audio Gear Roundup 188

Loyd Case200

Killer Rigs -----------202

Tech Medics204

Reviews ------209

Saltek P120 Gamepail Abit BE-6 Motherboard ActionTec 56K PCI modem B00.

Welcome to the element of surprise Jolistick and proportional programmable functions for unfair control of any game.



www.gravis.com/boo

Marin of the Court many making an interest the first designation of the Court of the Marin Marin Marin (1997)

Audio Update

The Art of Noise



by Dave Salvator and Loyd Case

Give Your Audio Sub-System a \$200 Ear-Lift

Things on the PC noisemaker front have been, well, kind of quiet. We've heard some great new speakers that have shipped this year from some unlikely places. But most of the progress has been on existing sound cards and sound chipsets, as well as in more new games that are using these 3D audio technologies, some to very fine effect. All of this begs the question. Do I need to upgrade my audio gaar to get ready for this holiday season's offerings? Well, like all things computer-related, it depends. If you're still running that old Sound Blaster 16 ISA card, it's high

time you made the move to PCI. Even Creative's AWE-64, a very good sound card in its day, is now long-in-the-tooth. And if you've been putting off upgrading those Dixie Cup speakers that shipped with your PC, then it's time to think about making that move as well. The great news is that there are some very good speakers to be had for under \$100 bucks.

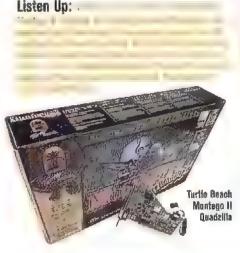
Even if you've got a solid PCI sound card and a set of speakers you like, there's one other piece of gear you may want to consider if you do a lot of online gaming and use voice-over-IP applications I ke Roger Wilco – and that's a good PC headset. We'll take a look at a few headsets, as well as your best choices for sound cards and speakers. That said, let's have at it.

Sound Cards

Sound card choices are more limited than in the past, but the choices that do exist have more features and better performance than ever. PCI is now the interface of choice; no major new ISA sound cards have shipped in the tast year, and it's unlikely we'll see any in the near future (sound of cheering in the background).

There are a number of key features to look for in a sound card, and their order of importance depends on what you're looking for. The first thing to look at, as with graphica cards, is the chipset. The two

most prominent audio chipsets are the EMU10k from Creative Labs, used in the Sound Blaster Live line, and Aureal's Vortex2 chip, used in the Turtle Beach Montego II Quadzilla and numerous other cards. The new kid on the block is ESS's Canyon3D, which promises more sophisticated positional audio through the use of Sensaura's MultiDrive technology, MultiDrive supports active 3D audio through all four speakers if you have a four-speaker setup. That is, HRTF (head-related transfer functions), which alter the audio stream to fool the ear into assigning a direction to a given sound, is calculated for all four speakers, not just the front pair. Avoid, if possible, any card that only supports the AC97 CODEC - it will eat CPU cycles and kill your game performance. Do look for a card that supports four speakers, though, even if you don't



Vortex 2, Revision B

Preview

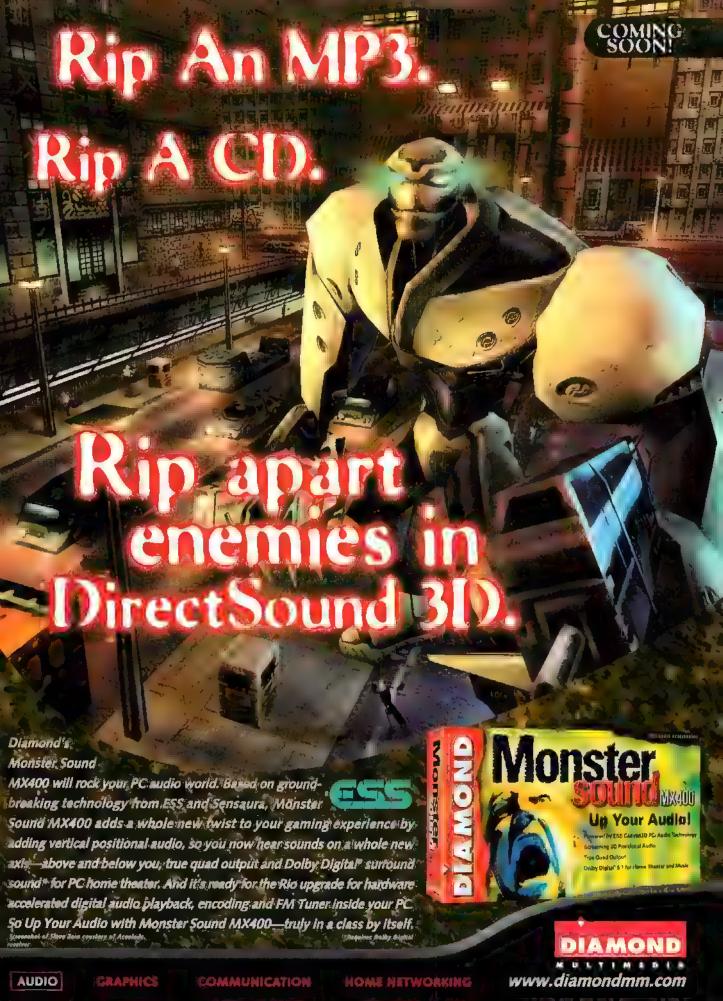
of Aureal's revision B Vortex 2 chip. It's the same architecture as the original, but Aureal has streamlined the chip and improved performance dramatically. At 22KHz, 8-bit audio with 16 streams, Audio WinBench reported 0% CPU utilization. That's right, 0%.

At 44,1KHz, 16-bit audio, the performance hit crept up to

At 44.1KHz, 16-bit audio, the performance hit crept up to 2.32%, but that's hardly a problem in any game. Note that any game that makes heavy use of ASD 2.0's occlusion and wave-

iracing may still show some performance hit, but Aureal's rev
B silicon should help a lot. Note that you'd probably still want
a Sound Blaster Live if you're a dabbling musician or recording
hobbyist, as CPU utilization does spike up with 32 voices. And
while MIDI sounds much better with revision B than the older
Vortex 2, it's still not quite up to the Sound Blaster Live sample
set. But the new Aureal chip should alleviate any concerns
about CPU utilization in games.

Cards using the new Aureal chip will be distributed under the Aureal brand by IOMagio: www.iomagic.com. Pricing had not been set at press time. — Leyel Case



plan on using that feature right away.

How is "Faster" Audio Good?

Performance is a key feature. You don't want your cool 3D audio to cause the frame rate of the game to tank. We can test CPU utilization with Audio WinBench 99, which gives us a good indication of performance. The performance champ is Creative's Sound Blaster Live—its CPU utilization stays under 3% with 8 and 16 streams of audio, and barely creeps up to 4% with 32 streams. Very few games support more than eight streams, however. The Sound Blaster Live also has a superb MIDI sample set, while Aureal's can only be described as adequate (MIDI isn't much of a factor in most games today, though). The Vortex 2, running the newer 2035 reference drivers, stays fairly low with eight 3D audio streams at 22KHz, but spikes up to just over 5% with 16 voices at 44.1KHz. That's still prefly low if you have a fairly fast CPU (the next revision of the Vortex 2 will per-





form better - see sidebar). The Canyon3D's performance was disappointing at both resolutions. Given that the Vortex 2 performance steadily improved with new driver releases, we can only hope that the same will be true with the new ESS chip. The Canyon3D came mounted on a Terratec sound card that supports digital (S/PDIF) audio in and out, an optional FM tuner, and wavetable add-on connector. The quality of the 3D audio was good, as were the MIDI samples, but the performance penalty is too great for most of today's demanding games. However, the DMX control panel should serve as a model for a good audio-control panel.

That brings us to the Sound Blaster Live versus Vortex2 debate. Our take on

it is choose a good Vortex2 board, like the Xital Storm or Turtle Beach Montego II, if you've only two speakers. If you have a four-speaker rig, flip a coin. The four-speaker positional audio is slightly better in our Audio WinBench listening tests with the Sound Blaster Live, but A3D tends to sound better in real games; in either case, the differences are relatively small. The Xital Platinum comes with a pair of headphones that have "force feedback" (read they vibrate). We found this to be a worthless gimmick and turned it off. but the headphones themselves sound fine, and the whole bundle is \$99. If we had to pick one card though, it would be the Montego II, with its cool diagnostic tools and useful control panel. The Sound Blaster Live fur version comes in a close second — especially if you're an audio hobbyist as well as a gamer — but it will cost you a bit more.

How We Tested

ost of our testing of this audio gear was subjective listening. For the sound cards, we ran Audio WinBench's CPU usage tests, which measure how much of the CPU gets eaten when playing multiple wave files through both DirectSound and DirectSound3D. We also ran a number of

MiDI sequences through the cards' wavetable synthesizers to evaluate the quality of their General MIDI patch set. What we found is that Vortex 2based and SB Live cards do a good job of keeping CPU usage low, though Terratec's new Canyon3Dbased card suffered from higher CPU usage.

For speakers, our testing involved a lot of listening tests - both of CD audio music as well as gaming audio. For musical material, we used a wide variety of music, ranging from Bruce Springsteen to the woofer-punishing Bach's Toccate and Fugue in D Minor, which brought a number of the speakers we tested to their knees. We were listening for tonal clarity (solid bass and clean, uncolored mids and highs). We also did our dreaded RFL (really, um, frickin' loud) test, where we ran the speakers up as loud as they would go without going into distortion. For gaming audio, we played the opening trailer for MECHCOMMANDER, as well as QUAKE 3: ARENA. Again, we were listening for good sound reproduction across the spectrum. and because the best way to have one's gaming audio is loud (as in very), we again did the RFL test. - Dave Salvator

How They Stack Up

Aud a WinBeiten Test Results for Soundcards





NOTE. At 32 voices, SB live is still under 495, we only list results for the D amond Vortex 2-based card because the other cards based on that offic funed in essentially Identical performances.

Audio Score Card

\$100 street price for all sound cards

Manufacturer	Reting	The Skinny
Diamond MonsterSound MX300	****	Best-sounding two-channel output for 30 audio effects; works well in four-channel also.
Terratec DMX	****	Does a good job in two-channel, but is batter with leur-channel output.
SB Live Value	****	Good four-channel output; best-sounding wavelable synth.
Xitel Storm Platinum	****	Best-sounding two-channel output for 3D audio effects; works well in four-channel also; comes with "force-feedback" headphones.
Turtle Beach Montego II Quadzilia	****	Best-sounding two-channel collect for 3D audio effects, works well in four-channel also.

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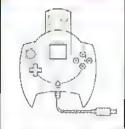




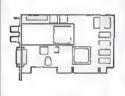


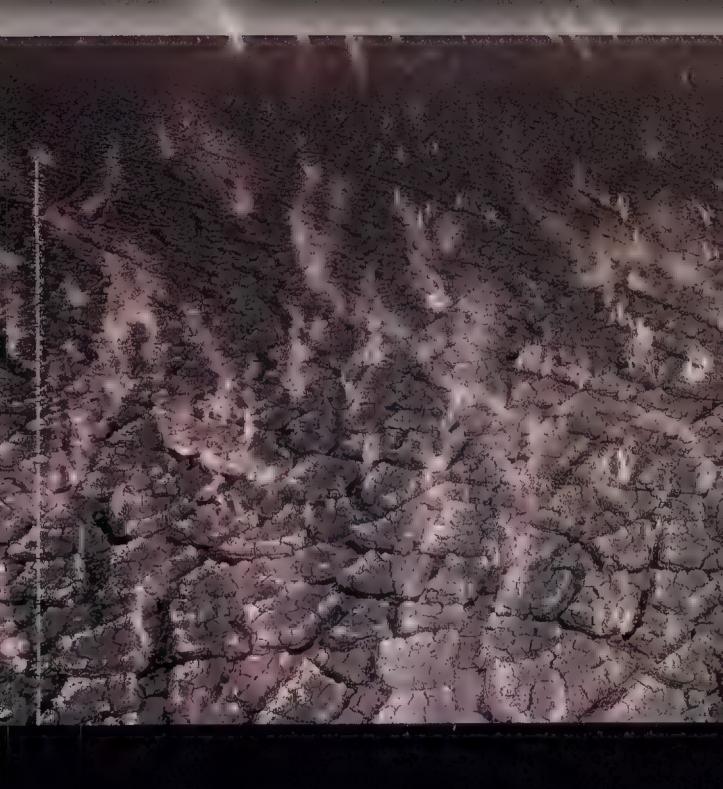












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Philips 370

Speakers

Developments on the speaker front this year have basi-cally consisted of new, cheap offerings for companies looking to pay in the sub-\$100 speaker range, where the great bulk of PC speakers are sold. There are, however, several noteworthy offerings that come in around \$150. There is one primary consideration to factor into a speaker-buying

decision, and that's of course the sound. Doesn't matter how cool they look, or what type of technology they use (cone driver, flat panel, dipole radiator, etc.); if they don't sound good to your ears, and cleanly deliver the volume level you're looking for, then they're not for you.

Secondary considerations include an integrated power supply, or at the very least a Soap-on-a-Rope-style power supply, in this day and age, wall-warts simply don't cut it. Also, took for speakers that have a headphone jack "upstairs," that is, on one of the satellite speakers. This is

a very handy (eature late at night when you're looking to make with the mayhem and don't want to wake up the whole house, if they've got the headphone lack "downstars" (on the woofer), then that's better than nothing. So really, the main thing to do when buying a set of speakers is to make sure that the store you buy from has a good return policy. That way, you can take home that prized new set of speakers and put them through their paces in your office, hovel, cave, etc., and make sure that they

sound good to your ears. Because taste in speakers is a little like taste in wine, and not everyone is going to agree on which speakers are the "best," That said, here are our recommendations, which we've broken into two categories, best overall and best value.

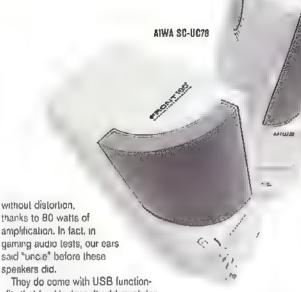
Best Overall: Yamaha YST-M55

Lablec 2414

Yamaha YST-M55

time denizen of the audio world, making everything from proaudio gear, to home A/V components, to PC speakers. In our listening tests the Yamahas simply delivered the best sound quality, both for music and gaming audio. There was plenty of lowend, and mids and highs were also well defined. These speak ers excel as well in the RFL test (see sidebar), developing serious volume

Yamaha is a fond-



They do come with USB functionality that frankly doesn't add much for gamers. In fact, we'd counsel you to avoid USB audio altogether, particularly on games that use 3D audio via DirectSound3D As a feature on speakers, don't even bother looking

speakers did.

Honorable mention goes to Philips' 370s. These speakers have more bass than should be allowed by law. They also emit very loud volume without distortion, and have good imaging, though Yamaha's offering still sounded better to our ears. Also worth a look are Labtec's 5820 units, which also delivered lots of volume and sound ed very solid agross the spectrum, both on music and gaming audio They didn't quite have Yamaha's smoothness, which is why the latter gels the nod.

Best Value: Altec-Lansing ACS54

Altec-Lansing's low-cost, four-channel offering impressed us for its general sound in music audio, but more so in gaming audio, where they produced good volume without distortion. And because they're four channel, they'll certainly help make 3D audio more, well, 3D. About the only thing missing is a headphone jack, though the power supply is integrated into the woofer. Honorable mention goes to Labtec, whose 2414s sound good, and develop decent volume levels before clipping becomes apparent. But the 2414s deliver what they do for about a \$40 street price. They lack a headphone jack, and suffer from wal-wartitis, but based on the merits of their overall sound, they're definitely worth a listen.





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800-367-7060



Speakers

\$100 street price for all sour	nd cards					
Manufacturer	Rating	Street Price	How They Sound	Power Supply	Hendphone Jack	Wattage Raling
AIWA SC-UC70	***	\$80	Generally good sound for music/game audio, though low-end and max volume level is locking.	Integrated	Upstairs	14w woofer, 7w/side satellite
Altec-Lansing ACS-54	****	\$80	Fere better on game audio than music, perticularly for clean output at high volume. Solul four-channel output in games.	Integrated	None	20w woofer, 10w each satellite
Labtec 2414	****	\$46	Sound field isn't very wide when playing music, able to play loud and clean better with music than with game audio: max volume on game audio not all it could be, but good given the low price.	Wall-Wart	None	15vy wooder, 10w/side satellite
Labtec 5820	****	\$150	Yery full sound, and high max volume levels for game audio and music, though not quite as smooth as the Yamahas. Has four different "surround sound" modes.	integraled	Upsteirs	44w wooler, 13w/side satellite
Logitech SoundMen X2	**	\$85	Bright, with weak low-end response; broke up badly at any volume level with game audio.	Integrated	Downstaira	24w wooler, 8w/side salellite
Philips 330	***	\$100	Generally good sound for music with a fauly wide sound stage, and ample bass response, very good volume for geme audio.	Integrated	Hone	25w woofer, 12.5/side salellite
Philips 370	****	\$140	Good sound stage; a ton of trass, almost too much at times; planty of volume for game audio, but not as much as Yamaha.	Sоар-оп-а-Rоре	None	30w wooler, 15w/side satellite
Yamaha YST-M55	****	\$150	Great response across the board; sound stage is a little light, but still good; developed large amounts of volume for music and name audio; made us say "uncle" before they did.	Integrated	Upstaire	40w woofer, 20w/side sajellite

NOTE: For headphone jack, "upstairs" means the jack is on one of the satellites, whereas "downstairs" means the jack is on the bass unit.

Now THIS...

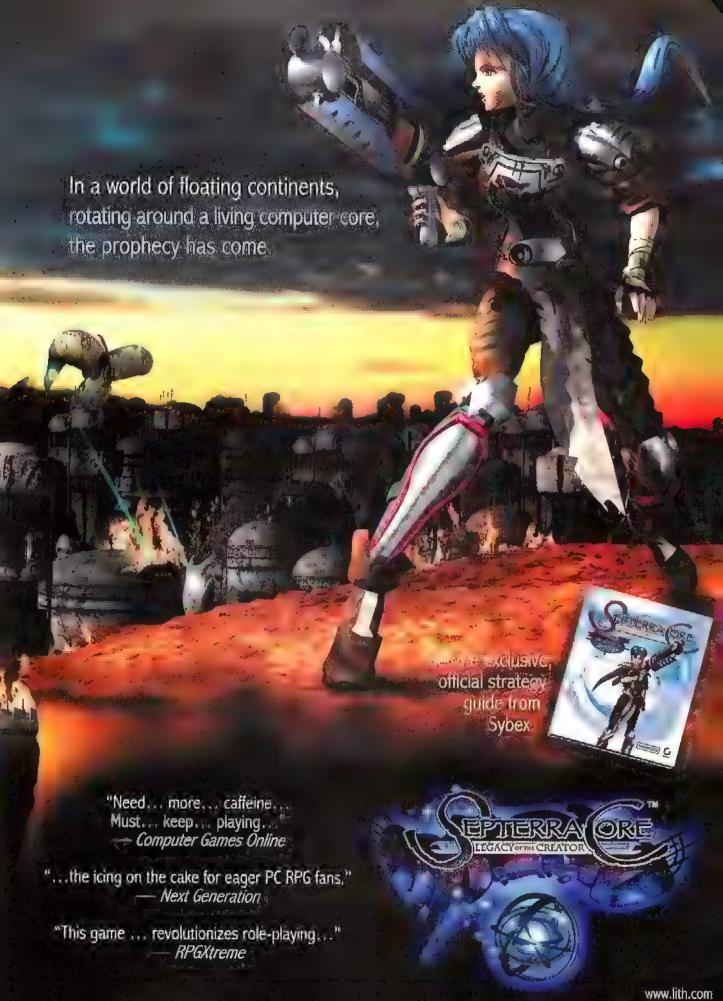
IS WAY BEYOND

ULTRA.

If you need fast...step up, strap in and get out on the edge with the all X graphics new accelerator from ELSA. Its hyperfast NVIDIA greence goes way beyond Ultra. And until you see what 200 billion operations of texture-frying Transform/Lighting and 256 bits of Quad pipe does to 3D --- you be in the dark ages, baby. Plus, right now, ERAZOR X is available with ELSA's cool 3D REVELATOR gaming glasses...4 sooo jump on it... you still here?







Under the Hood

BY LOYD CASE

Gear Hunter

Making Sense of Online Hardware Shopping

n my years of building PCs, upgrading systems, and writing about it all, I've bought a lot of computer gear. In the process, I've learned a lot about shopping. There's a whole world of jargon to hardware shopping that you learn as you become an experienced buyer

Like all jargon, the language can be strange and confusing. It's not intended to confuse buyers (call me an optimist), but it often does nonetheless. So I thought we'd spend some time doing a little shopping and clear up some confusion along the way

Let's start by paying a visit to www.computer-shopper.com, one of many good Web resources for direct buyers. In our virtual shopping experience, let's first go looking for a CPU

DEM: No, It's Not a Mantra

There are a couple of things to note in the screen shot. Note the top, circled entry: "Intel CPU OEM Pentium III." Then, check out the sec-

ond circled entry:
"Intel P-III 450 Retail"
What's the difference?
They're both Pentium
IIIs, right?

Well, yes, but ignoring the speed difference, there's almost
always a price differential between the
OEM and retail version. OEM stands for
"ongmal equipment
manufacturer." OEM
products are for
resellers to use in complete systems

In the past, that requirement was adhered to more strict-

ly than in today's Internet shopping environment. You will often see the terms "OEM," "white box," and "tray" used interchangeably. You'll also see "retail," "boxed," and "retail boxed" CPUs – they all mean the same thing Why is that? Are you really just paying for a printed box?

Well, no, not entirely. The retail, boxed version of any Intel CPU comes with a three-year warranty and an attached cooling fan and heat sink.

The OEM version comes, if you're lucky, in an anti-static bag. You have to buy the cooling fan separately. You're also at the mercy of the reseller when it comes to warranty; Intel supplies only a 30-day warranty to the dealer. There's no difference in performance, however, OEM.

products can be a great deal, but are often strippeddown

It may be something as simple as selling in a plain box without the software bundle, or something more complex like removing actual hardware features. It's common, for example, for OEM graphics cards to leave off the TV output that is common on retail versions.

But it can be even worse than that. One graphics card company once sold an OEM product to one of the larger computer vendors with a slower RAMDAC than the retail product. Both the graphics card company and the system dealer got into hot water with buyers for that bit of cost reduction. So, pay close attention to what features are listed for a card, and make sure you're getting what you think you're paying for.

Windows Shopping

Okay, now let's head out on our shopping tour again and find a copy of the Windows 9BSE operating system.

In this brave new world of e-commerce, there are still some online shops that are, let's just say, less than scrupulous...

Single CPU CRIM Perkism PLO, APORTPO Orders Welcomb

A PORT PORT OR STANDARD CONSTRUCTION

STANDARD CPU PRIAMA

LET SAY

SOURCE FLAS

Intel CPU Penkism III 460 weltall Cried to

Value out to

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Value out to

Intel Wittel P-SI 460 KETTAL

Intel Wittel P-SI 460 KE

This time, we'll visit another shopping service called Price Watch

(www.pricewatch.com). Price Watch is a good site because you get prices from a wide variety of Web dealers, sorted by lowest price to highest.

There are a number of ways to buy the Windows software. First, you can get the standard retail version, in either a full or upgrade model. Or, you can buy the OEM version, which is typically a full install version, but slightly different.

For one thing, the OEM version doesn't give you the goofy "This is for computers without Windows" message you get with the full retail install version. More important is the licensing agreement. The OEM version of Windows states that it must only be sold

with a full system. Many reseilers get around this with fine print, such as the line "must be bought with HD or CPU & motherboard."

However, a little careful shopping will reveal that you can buy the OEM version without even that minimal requirement, provided you're a known customer.

In this brave new world of e-commerce, there are still some online shops that are, let's just say, less than scrupulous, and could spawn some other e-terms like efraud, e-scam, or e-swindle

So paying a few extra bucks to do business with an outfit that a friend has recommended—or a shop that has a better return policy—may well be worth it.



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Thrustmaster TQS • \$115 • More control than anyone needs.

Logitech Newtouch • \$45 • In with the Newtouch, out with the Natural.

Mitsubishi DiamondPro 2020u • \$1,300 • Perfectly flat; good USB support.

Optiquest V95 • \$405 • Solid 19" monitor at a budget price. Proneer 6x SCSI DVD • \$180 • New Proneer Slot Drive DVD.

Pioneer DVD-103 • \$130 • Slot drive DVD.

Casse

In-Win Q500 full tower ATX • \$115 • New improved model.

Elan Vital T10-AB • \$82 • The case for upgraders.

Speakors

LFT-11 • \$500 • Beautiful imaging, clean sound.

Corton Avouritor
BA-835 • \$99 • Went
back to our
favorites.



Thrustmaster F22 Pro = \$120 00 = 11 just feels right.

CH Gamestick 30 • \$55 • Very nice little symmetric stick.

Power Rig

Camponent	Manutacturer	Price	The Skinny		
Motherboard	Asus P3B F	\$135	Back to the future		
CPU	Pendum III/600	\$800	It's the top of the heap, for now.		
Memory	256MB of PC133 certified HSDRAM	\$398	Just think, a quarter-gigabyte.		
Disk Controller	Adapted 2940u2w	\$349	BO megabytes per second.		
Primary Graphics	Falcen SE Xentor	\$350	Fastest TNT2 card around		
Secondary Graphics	3dfx Voadoo2/1000	\$99	Single Voodco2 for Glide compatibility.		
3.5" floppy drive	Toac	\$20	You still have to have one.		
Hard Orive	Quantum Allas 10k	\$825	A little warmer than the Fujitsu, but much fast		
Backup	lomega Jaz 2	\$300	2 gigs of backup.		
Hard Orive cooler	PC Power and Cooling Bay-Cool	\$49	Keep that At.as 10k cool!		
Primary Audio	Turtic Beach Montego il Quadzilla	\$99	For lour speaker BirectSound, A3D and EAX.		
Rear channel speakers	Jerna US-5	\$420	Ultimate rear-channel-powered speakers.		
Modem	Copper Rocket DSL modem	\$400	DSE at last		
Networking	3COM Ethedink 10/100 PCI	\$70	For fragging my buddles.		
Networking Hub	Netgear DS108	\$170	Muitiplayer & DSL modem support.		
Power Supply	Turbecool 300	\$129	More power Scatty!		
Mouse/Pointing Device	Logitech USB Mouseman Plus	\$49	Off the leash.		
Action Game Controller	Gravis Gamepad Pro VSB	\$29	Get two		
Rudder Pedals	Thrustmaster Elite RCS	\$79	Nearly partect foot placement.		
Driving Controls	ECCI COS 4000	\$1,129	For the serious (and rich) sim driver		
			Total CR 992 00		

Total \$8,283.00

The Fine Print: All recommendations based on actual evaluations and testing. Prices listed are everage low quotes from Web puce search angines like www.computershopper.com or www.computershopper.com or

Lean Machine

Component	Manufacturer				
Motherboard	Appen AX68C Pro				
CPU	Pentium RI/450				
Memory	128MD Corsair PC100 SDRAM				
Disk Controller	Built-inOMA/33				
Primary Graphics	Guillemot Xentor 32				
Floppy drive	Теас				
Hard Drive	Western Digital Expert 9.1				
Primary Audio	Diamond Monster Sound MX300				
Modem	Dlamend Sugra 56e				
D-Link 10/100 Ethernet	D-Link				
Power Supply	Built-m, 235W				
Keyboard	Logitech Newtouch				
Mouse/Painting Device	Logitech PS/2 Wheel Mouse				

"Which 3D Card Should I Buy?"

f there's one question readers have asked us more than any other, this would have to be it. So-you asked for it, you get it.

Chaosing the right 3D card depends on your CPU and your motherboard. We have two recommendations for you:

Choice A: If your CPU is a Pentium 233MHz or slower, or your motherboard is all-PCI (no AGP), or you've got a motherboard-down AGP graphics chip with no AGP slot, then get 3dix's Voodoo2 1000 board. At about \$100, it will do a very good job with current games, and a protty good job with games coming out soon. And the best part is that when you swap in a new motherboard/CPU, you can migrate the Voodoo2 board to the new setup.

Choice B: If your rig's metherboard has an AGP slot, then go with Guillomot Xenter 32, which is corrently the fastest 30 gun in the West. At about \$350 street price for the 32M8 version, this card is pretty pricey, but it is the fastest (see this month's review on page 209). Even if you're ruming a Pentium-II 233 or 26GMHz CPU, when you upgrade motherboard/CPU you can migrate the card into your new seting, and it's got room to grow with whatever CPU you mate it with if your budget can't deal with a \$350 price tag, TNT2 Ultrabased boards from Guillemot (Xenter 32), Dismond (Viper 770), and Greative Labs (30 Blaster TNT2 Ultra) will also do a good job without breaking the bank.

Product Watch

Where's Athlon?

ter last month's CPU shoot-out, you may be asking yourself, "So if AMO's Athlon CPU is so damn fast, why isn't it in the Power Rig yet?" A line question. The reason? At press time, we couldn't buy an Athlon anywhere. They weren't shipping yet. And because we don't want to recommend anything that you can't actually buy, we're holding off for a month. When Athlon ships, you'll see it in the Power Rig and maybe even in the Lean Machine as well.

In other CPU news, Intel is readying their next-generation chipsel, code-named Camino. Now rechristened the 820, this new chipset brings several welcome additions, including laster memory, a faster hard drive controller, and AGP 4X. The 820 will support a 193MHz interface between the CPU and the North bridge, as well as a new memory type called RAMBUS, the speed of which will be somewhere between 1.2GB/sec and 1.6GB/sec, a serious speed bump from the current 800MB/sec that the 440BX chipset delivers. The 820 will

also support SDRAM. since RAMBUS memory may be in relatively short supply as the 820 debuts this fall. In addition, the AGP pige will get much faster, going from 528M8/sec beak throughput to 1.16B/sec. The 820 will also support the UltraATA-66 snecification, so hard drives using that standard should see a performance increase. As soon as we can litch ane of these motherboards, we'll let you know how it fares versus

440BX, (3717)

C) stots. Softmenu, 4408X, ready for Pentium III.

Editary the same as a PII/400.

BMB at last.

In there.

ed for 32 bits.

I gotta have it.

CRPM from Western Digital.

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yeln with power

with the new, out with the Natural.

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Tech Medics

by Loyd Case and Dave Salvator

You've Got Questions, We've Got Answers

What does IDE mean? What is a DVD drive good for? Is there a DVD drive that also has a CD-ROM drive built in?

IDE stands for "integrated device electronics" and is the interface used to connect most hard drives in your computer. Current generation motherboards all come with built-in IDE ports that support the UltraDMA/33 standard. DVD drives are mainly for watching DVD movies, though there are a few

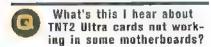
DVD games out there.

Most DVD games were originally released on CD-ROM, and have now been re-released with higher quality video for cut scenes on DVD. All DVD drives will read CD-ROM discs, though the very first DVD drives would not read recordable media (CD-R).

We get mail. Lots of mail. Huge quantities... well, you get the idea. Readers send us all kinds of Intriguing techie questions. We answer as many as we can directly, but because we find that you're often asking similar questions, we figured we'd answer the most frequently asked ones here. If you've got a hardware headache, send us mail at cow hardware@zil.com.

I can never seem to get the full capacity of hard drives after performing an fdisk. A 9.1 GB hard drive yields only 8.6 GB, and a 6.4 GB hard disk only yields 6.1 GB. Has it got anything to do with the BIOS setting? I'm currently using Win 98 and ABIT BX-6 R2 motherboard.

It's probably not your BIOS. White older BIOS chips could not properly detect hard drives larger than 8.4GB, the ABIT BX-6 rev 2.0 isn't that old. What you're seeing is the difference between how the hard drive companies view the universe and how the rest of us look at It. Hard drive companies believe that one megabyte is 1,000,000 bytes. However, most computers and operating systems believe that one megabyte is 1,048,576 bytes.



A few cards don't work properly with some motherboards.
A number of earlier motherboards that used the intel 440LX chipset didn't deliver adequate power to the AGP slot. At least one, the Asus P2L97 revision 1.05 or earlier, is

way out of spec, and will fail with most TNT2 Ultra cards. Others miss the rated current spec (B amps at 3.3 volts) by a smidgen. But a highly clocked card, like the Guillemot Xentor 32 or the Hercules Dynamite TNT2 Ultra that has an onboard fan, needs the full B amps of power. Guillemot has done a lot of testing on this, and you can find a list of problem motherboards at their site, www.nuillemot.com. At least one board, the Asus P2B-F, is fixed by simply updating the BIOS to the current revision.

I had Win98 and Red Hat 5.2 on a LILO dual boot. Being the Idiot that I am I used Partition Magic to just delete the Linux partitions. Simple enough, right? I figured LILO would ask which operating system I wanted to boot as usual, only "Linux" would be a "dead link" and I could fix that later. Well now it's messed up. The usual LILO boot usually looks like "LILO Boot:", but now it just says "LI" and freezes up. I try to boot from a floppy, I get to DOS, I can browse my C: and newly created D: drives all I like. But when I type "WIN" it starts to load Windows and then I get two

errors. One says that the registry files are unavailable (or something like that) then it passes by that and the BSOO comes up saying "A device or resource required by VFAT is not present or unavailable. VFAT cannot continue loading. System halted." Is there any way of fixing this?

There are several possible solutions, in order of increasing severity. The easiest one to try is to boot normally. You'll end up at the DOS prompt. Go to "\windows\command" and type: "sys c:". This will make the hard drive a DOS bootable drive. But it won't work if the master boot record has been altered by the Linux install. If that's the case, try: "fdlsk /mbr". Do NOT do this if you are using some kind of disk manager, like OnTrack or MaxBlast, Given that you were using Linux, though, this probably isn't an issue. The third thing to try is to get a copy of the latest version of Partition Magic. which understands Linux partitions, and can help in deleting Linux native partitions. Another cool utility is Symantec's Gdisk, which comes with their Ghost partition package. But Gdisk is command line driven and can be very dangerous, so use with caution. Gary



Five New Solutions.

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One Smart Answer

NORTON

System Works

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Get Off To A Faster Start On Monday.

Did your computer wake up feeling overloaded and sluggish today? Seems it can't load your database as fast as it used to?

Perk up its performance

with Norton Utilities,"
America's most popular
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With just one click, n'll give your entire machine a complete check-up. Including your CD-ROM, speakers, sound card, video board, modem, even your mouse.

You don't need to call in a computer repairman when you've got a doctor (the Norton Disk Doctor ") on call 24 hours-a-day.

Vaccinate A Virus On Tuesday.

It looked like such a friendly, innocent little e-mail.

But by reading it, you opened up a Pandora's box of corrosive code. In the blink of an eye, it

"If you want the best defense against system problems, turn to the granddaidy of all ntilly packages, Norton Utilities."

could have wiped away a year's worth of work. It could have screwed up your data. It could have tucked its deadly digital infection deep inside your hard drive. It could have, and would have...but you had Norton AntiVirus."



"The 1999 Software Product Of The Year!"

We've inoculated more computers than any anti-virus software ever invented.

And our new 2000 version packs even stronger antidotes. It automatically scans all incoming e-mail Windows Magazine, 7/99 attachments. It stops ActiveX and Java code

assaults. It even updates itself without having to restart your system. With 100,000,000 computers on the Internet, it's a big, contagious, wired world out there. To keep your PC in the pink, fight infection with Norton protection.

Clean Up The Clutter On Wednesday.

Sure you bought the biggest, baddest hard drive in the store.

But that was before everyone you ever met e-mailed you.

Before whiz-bang plug-ins so you could visit one site...once.

Before MP3.

Before video grabs and digital photos.

Before the hottest Sim game needed 8 CDs. Isn't it time to throw open the window, and toss out all that clutter!?

Sweep away your unneeded files, unused programs, and unnecessary junk. With the #1

choice for hard drive clean up... Norton CleanSweep."

Catch A Crash On Thursday.

"Our first choice

PC Magazane, 5/90

in its field

Tick...tick...tick...tick. Like some technological timehomb, all computers are doomed to blow up. Only you can't predict when yours will crash. Or why it will freeze. The only thing you know for sure is that it

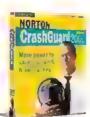
happens to everyone

And generally it happens when you can least afford it. Like when you haven't saved your work for over an hour. Or just after voa've entered the last address in a 385-person mailing list. Or the final numbers into a tedious spreadsheet.

We think the best defense is a stronger offensive. That's why Norton CrashGuard™ jumps right into the path of

an oncoming crash. It protects your work first, even creating a SafeOriginal," then guides you step-by-step through recovery.

Crashes happen. Just make sure you're not crushed by the next one.



"Superb....tt Informed us of problems we did not preciously know about. InternetWeek, 3/99

Call For An Instant Update On Friday,

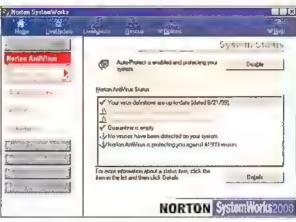
Has another week flown by already? In this high-tech world, a thousand things can change in only five days. There are new software updates, system patches, bug fixes, hardware drivers, and virus definitions. Luckily, you've got a six-month subscription to Norton Web Services." It's the most comprehensive PC resource center on the Internet.

Like a Yellow Pages for computer support, it's the one place to turn for all current system maintenance information and downloads

Internet "operators" are even standing by. Our Norton support staff is there,

online, to assist you in real time. And if you'd like, we'll even notify you about the latest developments, by e-mail.





Start any or all of Norton SystemWorks from one screen. No reboating!

Take A Break On Saturday With Our Free Bonus Pack.

As if owning "the best utility suite" (Windows Magazine 3/99) wasn't reward enough, we're sweetening the deal. We've added a special Bonus Pack that includes Zip-It!" which shrinks any files you want to archive, or makes them faster to e-mail.

You'll get Norton 2000" Blos 'lest & Fix. If you want to go to sleep this New Year's Eve without waking up to a nightmare on New Year's morning, check your PC now!

You'll be able to send and receive faxes directly from your computer with your bonus copy of WinFax™ Basic Edition. There's also Symantec Visual Page " for building and managing your own personal Web page. Even encryption software to safeguard your private files from prving Internet eyes.

Is Sunday A Day Of Rest? ...Hardly!

You can snooze as late as you want, because Norton SystemWorks is awake and alert to any potential PC problems.

Our award-winning programs are protecting your computer, automatically, 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week

So surf the Web Play a game Or, don't even touch your computer.

"Like a lifesaver bobbing on a turbulent sea, Norton SystemWorks will keep you afloat." (InternetWeek, 3/99)

"It's The Obvious Choice."

-PC Magazine

"Norton SystemWorks brings together several best-of-breed utilities for significantly less than you'd pay to get them separately. For

> system utilities, it's the obvious choice."

"...does even more crashes, missing or corrupted files, computer viruses, and other facts of Windows life."

-PC Week 4/99

one-stop shopping for What's the secret of our success?...

Norton Symmetry

In May, when PC Magazine bastowed it's prestigious

in SystemWorks' integration."

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Tollow There And and Norton SystemWorks, they - PC Magazine, 5/99

to help Windows users deal with the headaches of system

"...a seamlessly integrated suite of utility and antivirus software . . . an exceptional value."

-InternetWeek 3/99

"...other programs offer similar features but fall far short of what Norton has."

-Knight Ridder Newspapers 1/99









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Reviews

ACTIONTEC 56K PCI CALL WAITING MODEM

Requirements: Free PCI stot Price: \$105 Manufacturer: Actionted Contact www.actiontac.com

Hold the Phones

L've steered people away from PCI modems in general, because most of them are "soft" modems – little more than an excuse to sell more powerful CPUs. Actiontec has finally shipped a modem that's the exception to that rule. Soft or "Winmodems" use your CPU to process most of the modem chores. They're terrible for online games, and often cause unacceptably high lag times. More traditional modems have their own controller chip that takes the burden off the CPU. The Actiontec PCI modem also has its own dedicated controller, so you don't get that severe

CPU hit. When playing with TRIBES or Q3TEST 1 08, I saw server ping times as low as 120ms, and game play was smooth and lag-free on servers with less

than 250ms pings, I was able to connect

to a local ISP at data rates regularly above 44kbps (usually around 48kbps). The call-waiting is handy, too, if you've got that feature on your phone. I was able to take a call while online, tell the person I'd call back, hang up, then disconnect from the Net gracefully (you have about 7-10 seconds). I wouldn't want to do this in the middle of a hot TRIBES session, though...

At \$105, the Actionted is more expensive than those lowball Winmodems, but your gaming experience will be much better for the extra dough. -Loyd Case



ABIT HE 6 SLOT ONE MOTHERBOARD

Requirements: ATX chassis, Pentium II or better, and an UtiraATA hant drive for maximum performance, Price, \$130 Monufacturer: Abit Contact, www.abit-usa.com

Ultra-Frustrating

A bit has developed a welldeserved reputation for offering motherboards that cater to users who love to tweak their systems and play around with over-clocking. The new Abit BE-6



board has

UltraATA/66 hard drive controller, which is the latest version of the EIDE hard drive connection standard, and is faster than most current EIDE controllers on mother-boards. The board uses an HPT366 controller chip to handle the UltraATA/66 chores. There are four IDE connectors on the motherboard, and you can have up to eight IDE devices attached. Abit even sup-

plies an 80-conductor UltraATA cable for more reliable performance.

Despite the thoughtful inclusion of the better quality cable, UltraATA/66 on the BE-6 wasn't very reliable in UltraATA/66 mode, that attached a pair of Western Digital Expert hard drives. The system frequently locked up during WinBerich 99 disk WinMark testing when attached to the ATA/66 connectors. Switching to ATA/33, the hard drives ran perfectly, with no problems. In the end, I had to

carefully run each test, one at a time, to get the final results. During normal use, the system did crash several times a day, though it was hard to pin down the cause.

The bottom line is that if you desperately need an UltraATA/66 controller, you may be better off with another motherboard and a PCI controller card. Even then, the testing shows almost zero difference between UltraATA/66 and UltraATA/33, even on the fast Expert series hard drives. While Abit gets come credit for trying to push the performance envelope in general this time they may have pushed it a little too hard. —Loyd Case

SAITEK P120 GAMEPAN

Requirements Joyatick port Price \$9.99 Manufacturer Saltek industries Contact: www.saitekasa.com

Such a Deal

ost of the news about gamepads has been about the herd migrating to USB. But Saitek has focused on making a very inexpensive gamepad that can be found for 10 bucks. That's right, 10 bucks. Now, you may be thinking that you'll get what you pay for, but Saitek's P120 gamepad is a generally competent gamepad that works well for sports titles, and is competent for driving titles.

Installation is easy enough: Connect the Pt 20 to your joystick port (no USB con-



nectivity), bring up the Game Controllers

control panel, and configure a Custom controller with three axes and four buttons. A quick calibration and you're good to go. The P120 has a D pad mini-joystick that can be stored in the body of the gamepad when not in use. I do have a couple of design gripes. The third axis is controlled by two index-finger buttons, but the buttons are essentially digital, so that the "axis" only has three discrete positions (center, hard-left, hard-right). This "axis" might as well have been two extra buttons. Also, the four-button layout is essentially a "two-row" design, rather than a circular.



For ten bucks, the P120 is a very solid controller. Its no-fritts design gets the job done, though you can't daisy-chain multiple controllers, or connect it via USB. But if you're an occasional gamepad user, then the P120 is worth a look. -Dave Salvator

Johns Michael Farencer











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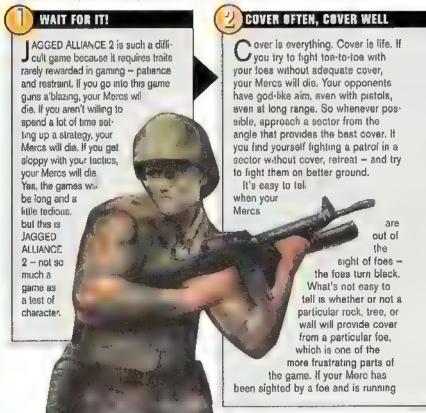
CAMER'S EDGE



THE EIGHT HABITS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL MERCS BY-GHRIS LOMBARDI

Jagged Alliance 2

AGGED ALLIANCE 2 is one of the toughest assignments a gamer will ever get. Even at the lowest level of difficulty, the supposed "newbie" level, this game can kick your tail from here till Sunday. There are no quick paths to success here, no kick-ass-quick schemes. Success requires the disciplined development of a number of sound tactical habits.



for cover, leave yourself extra movement points so that you can experi ment with various positions and postures. It may take some futzing around before your Merc is safe.

Once in adequate cover, the most common factic is to pop up to take a shot and drop back down. Always seave yourself enough movement points to duck down again, or also that's right — your Mercs will die.

That said, you must be very cautious with the Pop Goes The Weasel strategy. If your foes get set up in firing positions around your hiding spot, there's a very high likelihood that they will get interrupt shots when you pop back up.

And a quick note on sighting: just because an enemy has turned black doesn't mean you can't hit him. If your line-of-sight is not blocked, you have a chance (although greatly reduced) of hitting a fee who's "in the black." Sometimes these long shots are worth the ammo if the targeted fee is threatening your favorite Merc.

(1)

FLANKING

One way to alleviate the enemy-interrupt problem is to use the most important tactic in JA2 – flanking. Whenever possible, try to position your Mercs so that they have firing positions on the enemy from different angles. Flanking combined with the Pop Goes The Weasel strategy is very effective. A Merc can pop up from one position and fire, thus drawing the attention of your foes. Then another Merc can pop up from another angle. Since the foes are facing in another direction, they are much less likely to get an interrupt on the second Merc, and they must also change their facing to fire on the second Merc, burning valuable movement points. If you alternate between Mercs, you can keep your foes' heads spinning.



HIT-AND-RUN

Another useful factic, especially when outguined or outnumbered on a night operation, is the hit-and-run. Creep up on an enemy, take a nice shot, and then retreat. Have other Mercs positioned behind the first Merc so that they have a chance of interrupt shots on the pursuing foe. Fire, fall back, set up more potential interrupts. Repeat.

Whenever possible, try to completely disengage from the enemy and return to realtime mode when using the hit-and-run; the reason being that when you encounter the enemy again and drop into turn mode, all of your Mercs will have their full altotment of movement points.

Time to Pump You Up

Improving your Mercs' stats is buth rewarding and essential. How to improve stats is obvious in most cases, but here are some not-so-obvious — and some very cheesy — ways to pump Mercs stats.

Agility: The fastest way to improve agility is to sneak around in stealth mode with enemies nearby. It's a risky operation for a clumsy Merc, but it will improve agility very quickly.

Dexterity: The vultures that prey on dead bodies are great for target practice. Throw knives at them to pump up your dex.

Health: One of the more difficult attributes to improve. Try marching around Arulco with extremely heavy inventory loads and you might pick up a few health points.

Explosives: Obviously, handling explosives will improve this stat. If you find a land mine, pick it up, then plant it again, and dig it up again. Repeat and watch

your explosive stats soar. Fumble, and watch your Merc's disembod ed head soar.

Leattership: Train militia and this stat will climb through the roof Strength: Prying open crates and punching things will give you a good workout. Use stun grenades to knock out enemies and then pumme, them with your fists. There are also a few manimate objects that can be used as punching bags.



When conquering towns, there's no est path you must take. Here's one suggestion, which roughly orders the towns by

Omerta Drassen

difficulty.

San Mona Chitzena Cambria

Alma

Grumm Estoni Balime Orta

Orta Meduna

Item Combinations

There are a ton of items in Arulco that can be combined into very useful objects. Here's just a few.

String + Soda Can = Alarm

Attach to doors as a guard against sneak attacks
Aleminum Rod + Spring = AP Enhancer

Increases a gun's firing rate

Steel Pipe + Glue + Tape = Barrel Extension Increases a gun's range

X-Ray Tube + Gum + Fumblepack = X-Ray Unit Part for X-Ray Detector

Copper Wire + Lameboy = LCO Display Part for X-Ray Detector

LCD Display + X-Ray Unit = X-Ray Detector Ah, we've given enough away, haven't we? UP ON THE HOUSETOP, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK hash me great for selping and scouling. Projectiles also have a great range from up high.



T DIVERSIONARY TACTICS

You can use this fact to set up nice ambushes. Send your stealthy night ops Merc to one end of the map and fire off a couple rounds. Wait until the enemy has moved toward that Merc, then slink away. You can then, carefully, bring the rest of your Mercs to the side or rear of the waiting foes. They will be facing in the direction of the gunfire, giving you a chance to sneak up and take some nice shots at their backs.

(j) E

FIGHT AT NIGHT

Night ops are especially effective early in the game when you don't have long-range weapons and your enemy does, as the shorter range of view at night eliminates the enemy's advantage. Of course, the tables are turned later in the game when you've got the fire power.

1

A.I.M. HIGH, FIRE LOW

When targeting enemies, you can increase the accuracy of your shots by clicking the right mouse button. Do this, always. Your chances of hitting increase greatly.

Most players tend to fire for heads and torsos, thinking they are the most vulnerable areas of a foe. But don't forget about leg shots. Leg shots very often can make a foe collapse. When they collapse, they lose all of their current movement (making leg shots especially valuable during interrupts) and sometimes they will lose a second turn of movement as well. At the very least, the Merc will have to spend movement points to get back up. And incapacitated foes seem to take more damage from subsequent shots.

B PASS THE BUCKSHOT

Ot a Merc on the front line in need of a grenade? Throw it to him! Your Mercs are quite good at tossing and catching stuff. A needed item like a grenade or an ammo clip or a first aid kit can be tossed from the rear to the front in a single turn, with movement points to spare. (Note: if you're tossing a grenade, make sure you take the grenade from the inventory. If the grenade is in a Mercs "hand slot" when you tossit, it is live and your Mercs will die). You can also do this with weapons. Have only one high powered rifle? Take two shots, pass it to a neighboring Merc and take two more. If you plan it right, the entire squad could use the rifle in one turn.

CGW TIPS

Cheats, Hacks, & Hints

Hidden & Dangerous

Exercise. Type "iwitichest" at any spening sereon or more. Then enter the fellowing codes during gamentsy.

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Control

Consider

All items and dens

All items available

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Show theere

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Completes curren

PlayerecordsShows your position:



System Shock 2

Truck in the game hit [Shift]+[;]; and then type "summen_shi [item]"; where items one he: medical kit, pel amp, wrench, pistel, skotgun, assault rifle, laser pistol, EMP fille, Electro Shook, Gren Launcher, Stasis Field Generator, Fuelon Cannon, Cryotal Shard, Viral Prelif, Worm Launcher.

Those other endes also work:



Descent 3 ***

Enter the following as your player name to unlock the respective cheat:



CODES

BATTLEZONE

Unlimited Shields, Hold [Shift] and [Control] and type: BZBODY Unlimited Pilots and Recourses; Hold [Shift] and [Control] and type: BZFREE Full Map: Hold [Shift] and [Control] and type: BZRADAR

Unlimited Ammo: Hold [Shift] and [Control] and type: BZTNT

INTERSTATE '76

Use the names below to drive these secret vehicles.

POCILEIS KNAT HOTAIR THETRUTH SHERE Helicopter Tank Hot-Air Balloon UFO

WARZONE 2100

Press [1], type the code and int [ENTER].

time torge get off my land Stops and starts the mission timer Kills all enemy units on the mad

show me the power Gives 1000 extra power

power Gives 1000 extra power

hallo mem schatz

Skips to next mis-

work harder

whale for

Completes all currently active research topics

doubte up kdt selected All of your units are twice as tough Kills the presently

,ahn ketiley Infler baker selected units Toggle weather: snow, rain, clear Units almost Inde-

sparkle green

structible Stronger units

<u>Mec</u>hCommander

Create a new file named "buymechcommander.2" in the directory where MECHCOMMANDER is installed. No need to actually put anything here, just make sure the file exists.

Then type in these codes during a name:

Іотпе Ознац replenish ammo toggle God mode on/off

mineeyeshaveseentheglory

poundottlesh rockandrollpeaple reveals the map more money unlimited drop weight

Type Lordburny and then press b and left click on the target to hit it with unlimited artillery. "The Godfather Meets Sim" City—What more could an aspiring street thug ask for?"—Antagonist/www.aol.com



What happened in 1932 in the Americane

begendary white birds

And why did the professor die before telling me all his secrets?

Adventité Game : 50 Lar<mark>ge-Scale Puzz</mark>ies : 200 Places to Explore 5 Nours of Gameplay : Unique Atmosphere

Dydraffload ?

Bendet Volkalia UNE 1/3 ane

"Better than both Riven and Myst combined! A True Masterpiece."

Strange ?

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Transmission of the second



Total Annihilation: Kingdoms



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infrared .



Weapons de double damage

Weapons do half damage

Fag of war en/aff

Faster unit building.

Full map

Sold of the sold.

To activate cheats, press [*] white in the game and then type:

TEAMGOD AVATARGOD STUMPY CLODHOPPER

MEGANOGGIN BIGNOGGIN 5FINGERDISCOUNT NOBRAINER DEBUGKEYS

TURNPUNCHKICK

EXPLORE

Team god-mode Player god-mode Stumpy-made Enlarges player's feet and hands Mega head mode Big head mode Refill ammo Turns Al off Debug keys enabled Changes players

from 3D to 2D Victory conditions on/off

RECOIL

During playing hit [CTRL]+(X) to enter cheat mode, then type:

Cavairy Hemmit Medic

Invincible All weapons enabled Shields full strength

TEST DRIVE 5

Go to the first Options mean and type:

cup of choice

Unlocks alt cup raciós

that takes me back. Enables backwards

I have the key

mode Unlocks all cars and tracks

Learry a badge

Drive police cars lone orusader in a dangerous world

remote braking

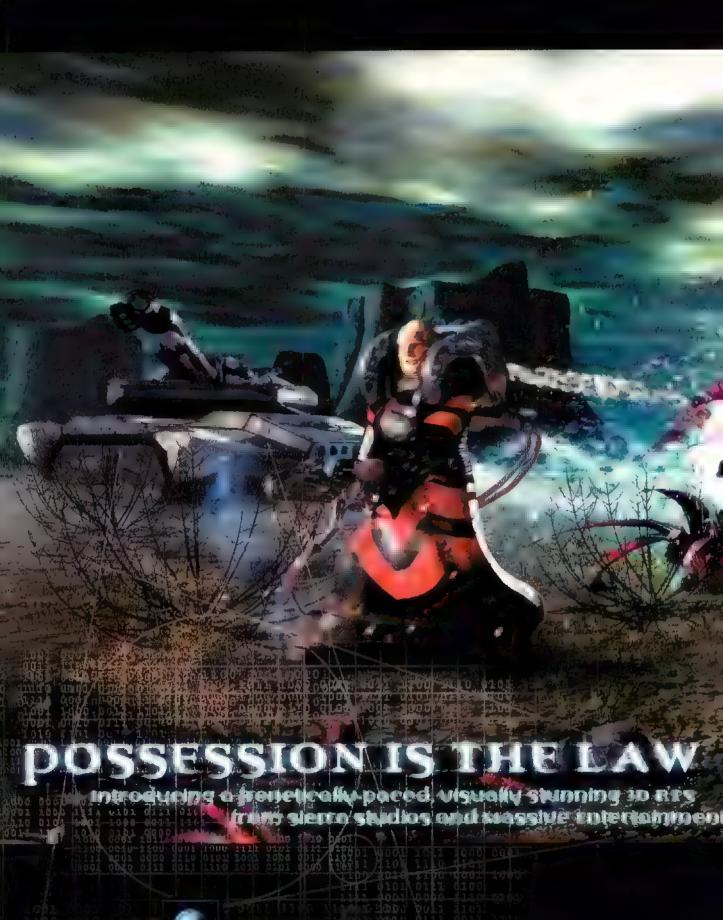
Press harn for nitre Press harn to

freeze opponents

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massive



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The Massive Entertainment AB,

INBIE GAMNE

INSIDE TO A

by Thierry Nguyen

The Mod Squad

onsider Valve Software the Medicis of modern action gaming. They're serving as "patrons to amateur mod (user-made game modifications) designers by eyeing talented people—such as the ACTION HALF-LIFE team—and either hiring or helping them. Valve not only hosted the recent HALF-LIFE Mod Expo in

help launch us in our own directions, rather than as a guide which leads us and narrows where we can go "

Handled carefully, official mod support can be a way for a company to last Valve knows this, and so does Epic (who is nosting an UNREAL Mod contest with \$150,000 in prizes, and making



UNREAL TOURNAMENT

modfriendly); it builds brand loyalty and breathes new life into titles

which may otherwise be considered passe (ACTION HALF-LIFE and GUNMAN con vinced the CGW editors to load up HALF-LIFE again).

More people are encouraged to try their creative hand, with official support, these new creations will get good exposure. Carmack and Romero had their start as ama-

teurs working out of a garage

The next Carmack is probably out there too, waiting for a studio to notice him or her and become their patron CCII

tracked down Justin Fisher of ALIENS DOOM fame, and

Developers
Need to
Support
Amateur
Designers in
Order to Last

San
Francisco,
but they also
provide
extended and
ongoing support for mod
authors.

Harry Teasley, artist/designer and mod guru at Valve, says,

"My support role is best characterized as 'being there for mod teams.' Since the SDK was released, the job of mod team support has largely been one of answering technical questions, or if I can't, funnelling the questions to someone who can. Teams may also have artistic questions, or marketing and legal questions regarding their mod, and I answer those as well "

This treatment is a contrast to times past, where mods were handled with a more laissez-faire attitude John Carmack would eventually release the source code for his various engines, and let the user community do whatever it

wanted to with his work But the source code was unsupported, and people had to learn from each other, rather than from the masters.

Justin Fisher, creator of the Allens-TC for DOOM (widely considered the best user-mod ever

made for an action game), remembers the early days of modmaking "It was sometimes a real grind to have to rapidly master a huge and unending series of often incomplete, buggy, unrelated, or incompatible software tools," he said. "More help from id would have been a very good thing in most respects."

Ending the End-User Support

The problem is that this level of support for the mod community takes resources away from the developers. Not every development team can afford to have even one person – let alone two or more – dedicated to working with mod designers. Also, from the designer's standpoint, there is a danger of having a creative vision hampered. Fisher is optimistic, though, "as long as the support can be used as a platform to



asked him what he's been up to lately. "I'm currently helping a friend set up a Web-design company," he eaid, "but the longer I spend

"but the longer I spend away from making new worlds and games, the stronger their pull

becomes, It's been several months now and I'm reaching the point where I'm going to put down what I'm doing and go for a good job or offer that comes my way." (Note to any development teams looking for designers!)

I also asked him if he had any advice for budding mod designers out there. "Probably the biggest pitfall I fell into, and one that many people still fall into, is making the most important parts of the game first. You need to know whether your plans are feasible, so you see if you can make the core elements work. But during the project, your tools get better, your skills improve, and you acquire new techniques. In short, the parts that you do near the and of the project (except for deadline rush) are going to be far better than the earlier work. So do as much peripheral stuff as you can at the beginning, and as much of the important stuff when at the height of your abilities and tools."

- 1. System Shock 2 2. Heavy Gear 11
- 3. Bungeon Keeper H
- 5. Quake III

FALCONS BEWARE: There's a NEW bird of prey on your tail.

FLANKER 2.0 features stunning graphics and streamlined playability without compromising the technical excellence of its famous predecessori Fly the Su-27 Flanker using a new 3D graphics engine and improved flight dynamics - or take off from the deck of Russia's Admiral Kuznetzov aircraft carrier in vour new Su-33. From the interactive training sessions to the ultra-realistic flight model, this premier combat flight sim is ready to pounce!

וניסטייםס פה/ביי גרונהמיינוי

Engage in multi-player furballs with up to 16 players via a LAN -go head-to-head or join cooperative missions has a LRM or the littlement?



COLORDERE A "The Tellistic Color of Aldreign Party Min Many Me (Meditalmade 1 3.17)







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BATEGY

by Robert Coffey

Gaming Outside the Lines

The days of cut-and-dried strategy genres are numhered. Yes there's always going to be a place for pure real-time strat in the COMMAND & CONQUER mold, an audience for Sid Meier CIV-style grand strategy, and a home for hardcore wargames, but they're being whittled down by gamers' love of anything new, and the growing audience of

casual gamers looking for games that cast a broader net.

Strategy's **Future Lies** in Genre-Blending

You'd think these disparate influences would work against each other, but surprisingly enough, the most interesting and enjoyable games on the horizon have something for both groups, and they're accomplishing it by blurring genre lines.

Role-playing influences are cropping up everywhere. While this trend began with the troop training portion of X-COM and

MYTH's experience-gaining veteran troops, it's really coming to the fore in games like Sir-tech's JAGGED ALLIANCE 2 and Red Storm's upcoming SHADOW WATCH, which charges players with developing their individual units in over 70 skills and abilities. While this has an obvious effect on the strategic por-

tion of the game, it gives strategy gamers a reward heretofore reserved primarily for MIGHT & MAGIC or BALDUR'S GATE fans—that sense of accomplishment that comes only from watching your characters grow under your guidance. Need more examples? What about WARLORDS:

BATTLECRY and its very traditional fantasy RPG heroes, or METAL FATIGUE's experience-gain-

ing 'mech

Might and Magic VII 2. High Heat Baseball 2000 System Shack 2

Jaggod Alliance 2

5. Niggle, a Palm Pilot Scrabble-olike

crews? Action

and strate-

av hybrids are becoming so numerous, they'd form their own genre if they

weren't such a diverse lot. The first BATTLEZONE game proved the two apparently incompatible genres were a natural fit, and the sequel is taking it even farther, allowing gamers to all but forgo the action side of the mix to focus on base-building and

unit commanding. Games like ROGUE SPEAR and SWAT 3 may look like first-person shooters, but their heavy emphasis on planning and tactics make them stand out from the QUAKE-alikes, and let sound strategists succeed even if their shooting

skills aren't the best. For the ultimate in shooter/strategy hybridization we'll have to wait for next year's TEAM FORTRESS 2, where gamers will be able to play a pivotal role as a team commander and never have to fire a shot.

Does this genre-bending harm titles? On the contrary, I think it lies at the center of AGE OF EMPIRES' incredible success. By giving gamers the ability to win by building Wonders and not destroying their enemies. Ensemble Studios created a dame that can appeal both to grand strategists and to realtime vets. With even more ways to win in the sequel, the AGE OF EMPIRES franchise should only attract and addict more fans. Appealing to different sets of gamers might be what draws many to IMPERIUM GALACTICA II, with its blend of grand strategy, real-time combat, and a game engine that lets you pause the real-time combat to issue orders to your ships.

So does all this mean that more traditional titles are dead? Not at all-Sid Meier could probably buy a private island with what he'll make from the upcoming CIV III, and a new WARCRAFT game from Blizzard is a guaranteed bestseller But if the genre as a whole simply stuck its head in the sand and

> refused to change, it could find itself under a headstone-right next to the murdered-by-clones adventure genre. KTI



Keep 'Em Coming Back for More

he only letdown with the best games inevitably comes at the end -

when the fun stops. That's why we're so happy that Bullfrog is making a commitment to providing fans of DUNGEON KEEPER 2 with new content and upgrades. Over the next few months, the designers intend to post new game features, new maps, unique units, mini-campaigns, and eventually even the editing tools every week on their web site, www.dungoonkeaper.com. They hope to do this through November, or longer if sales of the game warrant it. With luck, this will be a huge success and will encourage other companies to do the same.





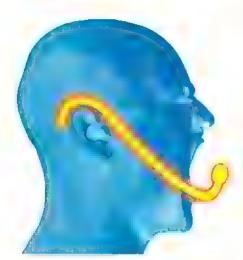
trategy titles have been using 3D acceleration for some time now, but it's just starting to really pay off in the eye candy department. BLACK & WHITE should set a new standard for imaninatively-rendered game environments, while DAAK REIGH 2's weapon effects, night-and-day cycling, and dazzling onvironments threaten to doom gamers to failure as they neglect lighting and just snak up the gameworld. And while gamers have been cohing and nahing over gargeous screenshots of Homeworld's space fleet barries, Imperium Galactica It's 30-accelerated space wars flat-out tops them, with incredibly dynamic combat highlighted by brillfant ship-rending lesers and beautiful, twitching lightning guns.

But the most impressive thing we've seen lately in a strategy little doesn't even use hardware acceleration: AGE OF EMPINE II's trobucket. A paragon of unit design and animation, we've heen churning these bables out in multiplayer games just to drink in their muscular grace as they leb their payloads at anemy walls and buildings.

HOW TO GET AN UNFAIR GAME ADVANTAGE.



Option #1: Painful, exotic surgery.



Option #2: Game Commander.

his won't hurt a bit.

lever again will you be fragged into time chunks while you look for the right key for "deathboam." With Jame Commander, any custom keystroke or key combination can be pre-programmed to a single voice." Command. Scream "Die Pigi" to launch an Alpha Strike at the 100-ten mech barreling down on you. Yell Wingman, Break and Attack" and your computer wingman will peel off to nail that incoming loogey het. In your tall. All without ever unclonching your clammy first from the joyatick.

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> — Layd Case July 1900 Computer Cambro World

mindmaker -

RPG / ADVENTURE

The Case Against Elves

then role-playing games were a near-dead genre in the mid-1990s, many gamers questioned why one of computer gaming's oldest genres suddenly became so unpopular. Almost all RPGs featured a pseudo-medieval swords-and-sorcery gaming world full of goblins, fireball spells, and giant rats. The lack of originality was so pervasive that new gamers were led to believe that elves and swords were RPG prerequisites. Strategy games with fantasy settings, such as MASTER OF MAGIC, were erroneously classified as RPGs. The horror!

How did the genre become so stagnant? RPGs are not about Tolkien-

Role-Playing **Games Need to Branch out Beyond Tolkien**

Mesiock's Playlist

1. System Shock 2 2. Half-Life

3. Jegged Alliance 2

Independence War

5. Wing Commander 3

esque settings. RPGs are about being able to assume a role in an open-ended, meaningful way. Through character creation and development, or just through choices made during the game, players individualize their pixelated alter-egos and ultimately their experiences. The setting of the virtual world is irrelevant in characterizing a game's gente

Ironically, although the inspiration for their computer counterparts, tabletop RPGs have featured a larger variety of settings, including science fiction (GAMMA

WORLD, TRAVELER), western (BOOT HILL), comics (MARVEL SUPERHEROES) and horror (VAMPIRE, WEREWOLF). Several of the original tablatop RPGs. such as DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and TUNNELS AND TROLLS. were swords-and-sorcery games, but there's never been a shortage of paper RPGs set in other environments. Yet with a lew notable exceptions, most of which were released in the 1980s, computer RPGs have focused exclusively on chopping up orcs and wielding +4 battle-axes.

With the genre in full resurgence I hope it doesn't doom itself again by producing

increasingly derivative games and ignoring innovative settings. The immediate future still looks promising. Interplay's FALLOUT games garnered both critical and commercial success at least in part due to their miliou's stylish amalgamation of futuristic post-apocalyptic and '50s Americana, SYSTEM SHOCK 2 is a sequel but still seems highly

original, because it includes relatively novel science-fiction elements such as cybernetic implants and psionic powers. Add to the mix a development team (led by Ken Levine) experienced in making innovative products, an enhanced version of the THIEF 3D engine, and some strong first-person shooter elements, and it's easy to see why the title gar-

nered good advance buzz. Helmed by industry veteran Tom Hall,

ANACHRONOX's development team seeks to combine truly original science-fiction environments and the same sort of action/RPG hybrid gameplay offered successfully by several console RPGs. DEUS EX merges elements of James Bond's adventures and the X-Files. With the impressive

Who dares ignore the elves? For comments from the creators of DEUS EX, FALLOUT, and SYSTEM SHOCK 2 on this column's topic, as well as daily RPG news updates, check out Desslock's RP6 News at desslock.gamespot.com.

Dens Ex

Food for the Celtic Gods?

complex gaming worlds and compelling storylines are features that many RPG fare would glady choose over the latest graph-al balls and whistles, Such fans should check oils NETHERGATE, a game set in 60 A.D. Britain dur-ing the conflict between the Roman Empire and the Celts. Created by Jeff Yogel, author of the applaimed EXILE series, NETHERGATE blends/Im-torios/and/mythological elements and allows play ers to create either a Roman or Celtic adventuring. party, with gamepley verying depending upon a party's allegiance. A portion of the game is free www.spidwab.com, Next up: AVERNUM, a more traditional fantasy RPG that will use an enhanced version of the NETHERGATE engine.

WHEN IN ROME HETHEREATE intends July Vegel's fine series of traditional NPGs that favor com-plex gaming over graphical giramickry. This ene's set in GE A.D. Hittain.



UNREAL engine, DEUS EX's development team has created some of the most realistic-looking, immersive environments yet seen in a role-playing game. The team is led by Warren Spector and Harvey Smith, who helped create the original SYSTEM SHOCK, ULTIMA UNDERWORLD, and other critically acclaimed RPGs. Promising games are also in the works based upon White Wolf's VAMPIRE and WEREWOLF milieus, although the game based upon the latter will emphasize action over RPG elements

Even with the gradual expansion of computer RPGs into science-fiction and horror settings, it still seems as though developers are artificially narrowing the scope of what really is gaming's broadest genre. How come we have yet to see computer RPGs set during the world wars? Saving Private Ryan's band of soldiers are a suitable model for a WWII RPG party. The Wild West? Outlaw legends provide ample fodder for compelling RPGs. Those intuitive settings have been consistently ignored by developers, as have others. How about a Viking RPG featuring the gods of that mythos? What about ancient Egypt, medieval Japan, or imperial Rome? Unless RPGs innovate and evolve into new settings, the renaissance RPGs are enjoying will quickly end. So many possibilities, yet such little innovation shown to date. ব্ৰিয়া

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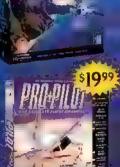
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INSTINE

SIMULATION & SPACE

by Gordon Berg

organara@cancentric.na

Labor of Love

t's a shame (and a crime), but almost every computer product released these days seems to require a patch. And while most companies will allocate some time and resources toward a game after it ships, many

Patching Your Favorite Flight Sims, 24–7 games don't achieve their full potential even after a patch or two. Such was the case with two recent flight sims. The companies released an intended "final" patch, but both games still needed more work Fortunately for us, a grassroots effort prevailed in both cases—a dedi-

cated handful of people were willing to produce further revisions in their spare time. The newest patches should be available by press time

European Air Wer

Two people are currently hard at work on EUROPEAN AIR WAR. EAW may be a gaming media darling, but it still has its problems, especially in the multiplayer department. After the version 1.1 patch shipped, Brandon Gamblin and Chris Coon of MicroProse kept close tabs on the reaction in the Internet newsgroups. Says Gamblin, "We heard about the troubles that EAW was having on the Internet. So, a few of us started working on the Internet problem in our

kordon's Plaulist

1. Warbirds

2. Jagged Alliance 2 3. Baldur's Gate: TOTSC

3, Baidur's Gate: 1015G 4. European Air War (with v1.2 patch):

5. MechWarrior 3

spare time, still devoting full-time effort to our main projects. That was how the 'unofficial' patch got started."

Hasbro/MicroProse were supportive of the process. "There was

never any difficulty with them," said Gamblin. "Once it looked like we had sufficient cause and substance for a patch, we told Hasbro/MicroProse about it and they started giving us support for it (QA, artists, etc.). It was always understood, however, that this was not part of our main work. This was always an extracurricular patch."

Although this patch focuses on multiplay, it also adds some new features and a faw more bug fixes. In addition, an "unsupported" art kit has been made available, allowing players to alter their own planes and virtual cockpits, as well as the terrain. For more information, go to support microprose com/eawupdate.htm.

Screamin' Demons

ParSoft's Michael Harrison had to travel a different road with SCREAMIN' DEMONS OVER EUROPE. Although version 1.5 essentially turned SDOE into an altogether different flight sim, it still wasn't enough, especially when it came to the flight modeling. "Unfortunately, we were only given two weeks to work on the patch, so that naturally limited what we were able to fix or add," explains Harrison. "Activision didn't want to invest more time on the game, but there were elements that needed modification. Rather than leave the users in the lurch, I decided to take on future mods and fixes. Given that a personal goal of mine was that we try to build a community around OpenPlane so that we could continue to improve upon it, this struck me as the right thing to do rather than to treat each game as an independent island."

These are admirable goals to be sure, but Activision was hesitant to approve any additional patches. "Some people

Another FALCON Patch

add-on products

Speaking of patches, the 1.07 patch to FALCON 4 has seried. Five months in the making the litter after good king and making the litter after good king and making a second little patch on the month demonstrate ALCON, the patch of a making the reward of ALCON, the patch of a making the reward of ALCON, the patch of a making the reward of ALCON, the patch of a making a patch of the second this is hardly surprising. Nonetheless, HI/MicroProse is hoping the next patch will be the last one, thus treeing them up to finally work on some

there weren't too keen on the potential tech support calls and confusion that unsupported patches might

cause. After what I assume was much debate, they decided to allow me to produce patches unsupported by Activision."

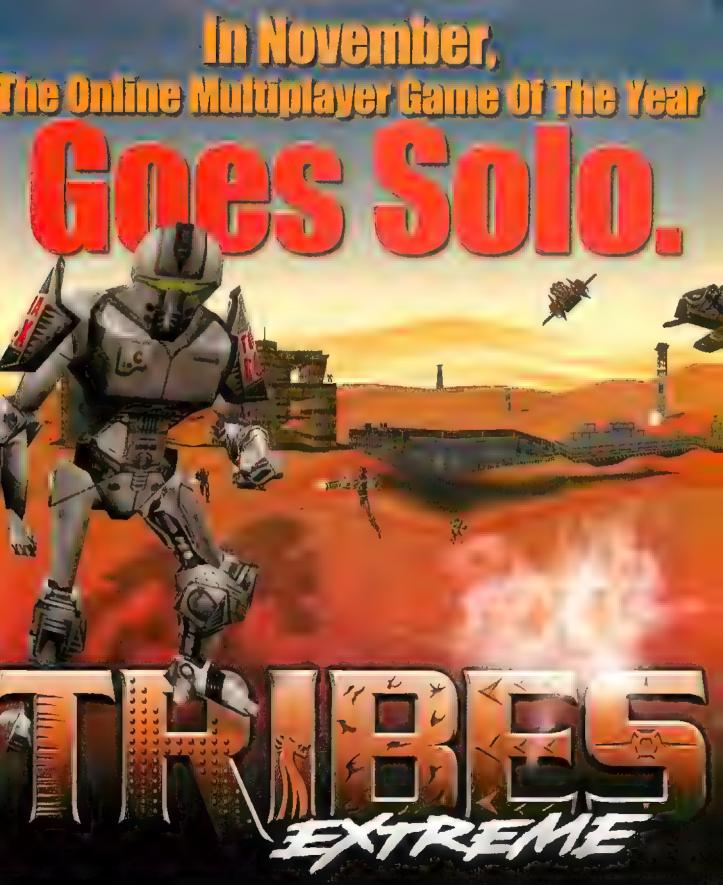
Harrison is primarily focusing his efforts on the flight model, but he's also adding new features.
"The modified aircraft won't be wholesale replace-

ments of the aircraft that shipped with the game, since generally those aircraft were sound. There were some changes made to them prior to shipping that made them easier to fly. I'm undoing those changes as well as tightening up some of the center of gravity and weight distribution data."

The challenge has been in getting everyone to agree on what the final flight model should be. "I've found that many people have their idea of what makes a WWII arcraft," he says, "and I'm attempting to attain a balance between realistic simulation and playability. As to what will become the 'default,' that will largely depend on the users themselves Regardless, there's plenty of room in the OpenPlane world for both hard-core flight simmers as well as for those who just want to get up into the air."

For more information on ParSoft and OpenPlane, check out $\underline{www.openPlane.org}$.

Milion net engaged in narial manauvers, Perden Sery works as a network administrator for a new profit sectol services organization.



The original, best-selling Starsiege TRIBES" pioneered the genre of online squad warfare. While TRIBES Extreme significantly enhances that multiplayer online experience, it also adds an entirely new single-player campaign against computer opponents, as well as new "team-building" missions that let a team of players hone their squad combat skills against computer-controlled teams on full-scale online maps. Join Us.



SPORTS

by George Jones

Let's Get it On!

saw the early dominance of Microsoft firsthand when I worked at PC Week magazine, one of Computer Gaining World's boring older brothers. Remember WordPerfect? Or how about Lotus 1-2-3?

Six years later, having seen Microsoft Internet Explorer reel Netscape in like a little cod, I'm wondering if EA Sports is

Microsoft vs. **EA Sports**

picking up on the fact that Microsoft has them square in its targeting reticle. To be sure. EA has witnessed many a competitor from VR Sports to Sierra Sports, trying to move in on their turf. And to their credit. they've repelled all challengers in practically

every major sports category with their unique blend of attltude and action gameplay

But now Microsoft is here, using the same tactics they've used to dominate other markets. Tactic number one: They've taken their time with their products. Both NFL FEVER 2000 and NBA INSIDE DRIVE have been in development for a long time. Tactic number two: Not having to worry so much about profits this time around, they're releasing their products at a much-lower-than-normal price:

Battle of the Network Stars

But the gaming market is a little different. Since Microsoft

have in the browser or productivity arenas, a lot of this issue bolls down to one question: Who has the better games? Here's a breakdown

Hockey.

EA Sports has this one so locked up that

doesn't have as many advantages in the gaming arena as they

High Heat 2000

Age of Empires 2 (beta) Madden 2000 NFL Fever 2000

5. Quake III

"Boorge's Playlist

been expecting.

Central, NFL FEVER 2000 predicted that the Vikings and the Broncos would make the Super Bowl with the Broncos running away with it 27-1/ MADDEN 2000 saw

things a little differently in one regard. The Broncos went out in the first round of the playoffs in this season sim, and the Jaguara somehow played their way into the Super Bow against the Minnesota Vikings.

Something that werried us is that MADDEN 2000 also saw the 49ers fail to make the playoffs. Here's a word to the wise; If this

actually happens, the resulting depression here in the Bay Area might trigger the big Internet stock crash everyone's

Once again, we will try to convince the magazine's publisher to buy us a satellite dish so that we can "keep track" of how well these games model the real NFL season, and we'll let you know how the two games fare over the course of the next lour months.

Microsoft isn't even competing right now (Side note: NHL 2000, which should be coming out soon, takes the game back to its early, faster-paced, snoot-it-out roots.) Act datage EA Sports



Football is a closer contest than I originally thought, given the MADDEN series' noble lineage. MADDEN 2000 definitely has the bells and whistles-like the totally unique Great Moments mini-game, and 32-season career modes, It also has years of development behind it which means you'll see unparalleled defensive play. To Microsoft's credit, they didn't just reverse-engineer MADDEN, the design team really put

forth their own vision of digital football. It shows. NFL FEVER 2000 looks and plays more realistically, and incorporates a

layer of graphical detail I've yet to see anywhere else. If you're into faster action and attitude choose MADDEN. If you re more into reabsm, it's NFL FEVER

Advantage Tie

NBA LIVE 2000 has better graphics, and two of the coolest features I've seen in a basketball game. You can play with players from the NBA's past including Chamberlain, Magic, and Bird, and you can play with any of these legends-or any other NBA player-in a oneon-one schoolyard mode. Although Microsoft's NBA INSIDE DRIVE does play more like the real-life sport it simulates, the game lacks some visual appeal—as well as the classic players, free-agent salary negotiations, and the flavor of the game.

At VI Ligg EA Sports

Nolo contenders. The competition here isn't even close. TRIPLE PLAY dominates MICROSOFT BASEBALL. But TRIPLE PLAY isn't the finest baseball game around anymore. That title belongs to HIGH HEAT

Advantage 3DO

The frightening thing about all this for EA Sports is that Microsoft, unlike the VR Sports of the world, will keep plugging away until they figure out the formula for success. It's up to Electronic Arts to determine what happens-it's their battle to lose. If EA maintains an aggressive focus on balancing fun versus realism, and doesn't develop conservatively, Microsoft may find itself unable to easily dominate the sports arena

And for PC gamers, a competitive genre is much more fun. PlayStation owners know what I'm talking about-PSX football games got much better when NFL GAMEDAY came out. ISSLI

Life vs. Computers

ne of the night. points in my life. involves ins chair shed autumnal ritual of running the year's batch of football titles through a full-season simulation. This year, I picked MADDEN 2000 and NFL FEVER 2000 as the officially-licensed prediction

Unless the two games know something we don't, the regular season featured surprises in both casee. In addition to predicting that the 49ers wouldn't even make the playoffs, and that the surprising Tennessee Titana would win the AFC

analis aga a complited calling (紹介女) 作



"At Cisco Bootcamp we learned multiprotocol routing. Configuring IP was a bit familian But we also needed to configure IPX and AppleTalk, which was completely foreign to me. Through a lot of troubleshooting and working along with my teammates. we got the whole network up and rinning," - Mark, age 17, Cisco Networking

Academy student

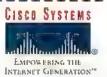
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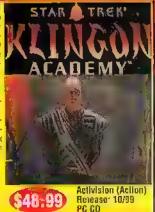
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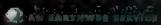
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Johnny Levels Up

The King is Gone, but He's not Forgotten

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold -William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming" (1921)

ow do you begin a column about Johnny Wilson? With a joke, perhaps, to pay tribute to his unrepentantly raunchy sense of humor? With a memorable anecdote from times past, to acknowledge his 15plus years at Computer Gaming World? Or how about with some kind of erudite, literary quote to set the tone and establish a conceptual framework - the kind of thing Johnny always did in these pages?

The problem, unfortunately, is that whichever way you choose to begin, you're almost certainly doomed to failure Because nothing you could write in one page could possibly do justice to a man who has been so closely identified with, and done so much for, this magazine So you might as well go for the literary one. It'll make you look smart for the chicks - and Johnny could always appreciate that, too

As it turns out, this Yeats guy knew what he was talking about. The center cannot hold forever, even at a computer gaming magazine. Johnny Wilson, CGW's longtime editor-in-chief and patron saint, has moved on. And why should you care? Because you wouldn't be holding this magazine in your hands right now were it not for his extraordinary, near two-decade long career here

Way back in 1982, when Johnny first started working for CGW, gaming was still a young, humble, hobbylst's medium; a subculture of a subculture. Gaming was far from mainstream entertainment - it was the arcane, funky new refuge of chess club and Dungeons and Dragons veterans. Guys like Richard Garriott and John Romero were not yet celebrity superstars, just geeky programming guys writing code late into the night.

The early CGW reflected this, amateurish, pamphiet-sized, with ugly black-and-white artwork Johnny's first review was for a game called HORSE RACING CLASSIC for the Apple, which he called "a darn good party game."

From such humble beginnings, Johnny ascended the ladder from writer to Associate Editor to Editor, and eventually to Editor-in-Chief. Along the way, he helped shepherd the magazine from an underground geeklest to a mainstream international publication with hundreds of thousands of readers. He saw the industry grow and mutate into something radically different from what it was, and he took CGW through this same process heroically struggling to straddle the line between satisfying older readers, while giving newer readers something they could relate to. Maybe he didn't succeed all the time, but he damn sure never stopped trying.

What is important about Johnny Wilson is this: He taught the entire industry that though computer games





may be, in the grand scheme of things, a rather frivolous business, that doesn't mean we can't think about them and write about them with intelligence, and passion, and a strong sense of integrity.

It was Johnny Wilson who insisted that all reviewers finish a game completely before writing a review. To him, anything less was half-assed and irresponsible - the equivalent of writing a movie review after walking out halfway through. It was Johnny who for years refused to preview a game unless we had playable code. Long after CGW's competition began escalating the war to grab "exclusive" previews, Johnny stuck to his guns - over the protests of his own staff and superiors - not wanting to participate in what he saw as empty cheerleading for games that might ultimately suck

Johnny Wilson obsessed over every page of every issue that he ever worked on. I've never met anyone who took his job more seriously. He could not bear to see us print something that was incorrect. He'd fret in his office for days, with the door closed, if he perceived that we had blown it somehow. It was sometimes painful to watch.

Market realities forced CGW to evolve over the years, but Johnny always fought to ensure that that evolution never took place at the expense of the magazine's integrity. He was a warrior and a visionary. He worked ceaselessly. He never gave up, even when he wanted to

He also did the best Elmer Fudd I've ever heard.

Johnny Wilson is alive and well. Actually, with a new wife, home, and job, he's probably more alive and more

...you wouldn't be holding this magazine in your hands right now were it not for Johnny Wilson's extraordinary, near two-decade long career... []

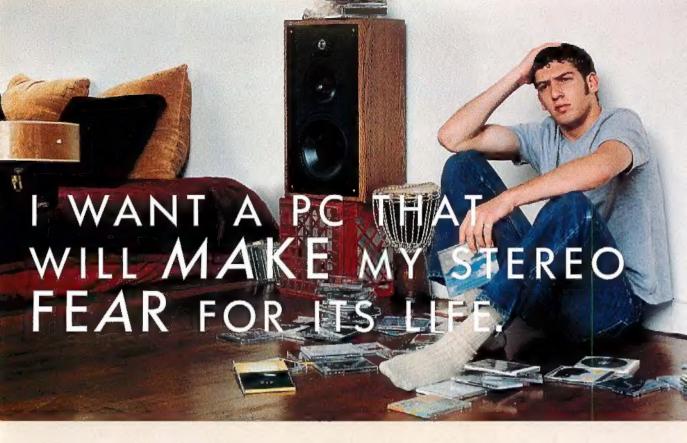
> well than he's been in at least five years. So don't feel sorry for him. Feel sorry for his new bosses instead, because, unless he's undergone a radical personality change, he's going to start giving them all hell before they know what hit them

Don't feel sorry for Computer Gaming World, either. Because the thing is, Johnny Wilson hasn't really left at all. His heart and soul are infused on every page of this magazine. He taught us all everything we know. He was, and is, The Man

Thanks, Johnny

What Jeff does realize is that if it weren't for Johnny, he'd still be reviewing networking cards for Macintosh magazines. Jeff thanks Johnny for that, too. Send email to jeff_green@zd.com. 🗺 🗸

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